



# A J A N T A

## PART TWO



THE COLOUR AND MONOCHROME REPRODUCTIONS OF THE AJANTA FRESCOES BASED ON PHOTOGRAPHY

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*and an Appendix on Inscriptions by*

JOHN ALLAN

TEXT

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OF HIS EXALTED HIGHNESS THE NIZAM

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# PREFACE

THE welcome offered to Part I of the book by readers in all parts of the world, and the highly appreciative reviews published by the press have been a great encouragement to me personally, and a source of eminent satisfaction to His Exalted Highness the Nizam's Government, who have shown very keen interest in this undertaking from the beginning, and financed it most liberally, even at a time when the retrenchment axe is at work in all places. For this policy credit is due largely to Sir Akbar Hydari, the able Finance Minister of His Exalted Highness the Nizam's Government, whose interest and solicitude for the preservation and study of the Ajanta paintings are well known.

In the preparation of Plates for Volume II, I have followed, as far as possible, the advice of some of my able critics to reproduce the important subjects on a large scale, so that the technical or artistic detail, which sometimes suffers by reduction, may remain clearly apparent. This principle, although duly observed in the printing of Part I, wherein detailed reproductions of the two *Bodhisattvas* (Plates XXV and XXXII) and the *Black Princess* (Plate XXXIII) are given, has been followed in a more liberal manner in this volume, and four colour plates (XXI, XXXII, XXXVII, and XLI), and two monochromes (XIII *b* and XXXI *b*) give detailed reproductions of subjects which, on account of their exceptional qualities, will appeal to the artist or to the general reader.

This volume is devoted to the frescoes of Cave II only, and as on account of the occupation of the Cave in comparatively recent times by hermits and people of other faiths than Buddhists, the frescoes have suffered much by smoke and fires lit by these unsympathetic occupants, the reproduction of the paintings has been a very difficult problem for us. If it had been a layer of smoke only, the removal would have been an easy matter, but because of the heat of the fire and constant contact with smoke, the colours have perished in many places, and it seems to be absolutely impossible now to restore them by any scientific process. A great deal of damage has also been done by birds and the inclemencies of the weather, and in judging the plates included in this volume, I request my critics kindly to bear all these facts in mind. If some of the plates are found too dark, or indistinct as regards detail, the fault is not to be found with the photographer or with the process-workers, but with the charred surface of the paintings. Again, if in some plates unsightly scars offend the eye of the artist, he should kindly remember that we have reproduced faithfully the fresco as it is, the damage in the original having been done by birds or insects.

In the making of the colour plates of this volume, Messrs. Henry Stone & Son, Ltd., of Banbury and London, are associated with Messrs. Bruckmann AG., of Munich, and of the eighteen plates, nine (Nos. VII, IX, XXIX, XXXII, XXXV, XXXIX, XL, XLI, and XLVII) have been made by the former firm, and nine (X, XX, XXI, XXII, XXX, XXXVII, XXXVIII, XLII, and XLV) by the latter. I take this opportunity to thank the Directors of

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both these firms for their unfailing attention and kind interest in the accomplishment of this difficult work. The monochrome plates, the printing of the text, and the binding of the volume, have been done by the Oxford University Press, under the able direction of Dr. John Johnson, Printer to the University.

Mr. Sayed Ahmad, the Artist-Curator of Ajanta, has prepared the 'colour guides' for this Part, and he has also given most valuable assistance in comparing the proofs of the colour plates with the originals on the spot. The photographing of some subjects, which were left out by Mr. E. L. Vasey, has been done by Mr. E. Franswah, the Photographer of the Department, and how far his work has been successful may be judged from the Colour Plates XXI and XXXVIII, showing 'A Princess' and 'A Procession' respectively.

The inscriptions painted in this cave have been most carefully studied by Mr. J. Allan, Keeper of Coins and Medals in the British Museum, and are published in the form of an Appendix to the Explanatory Text. It is hoped that Mr. Allan's scholarly remarks on the palaeography of these inscriptions will be of interest not only to students of this subject, but to the general reader who is anxious to know the probable date of the paintings of this cave.

As I am not a Sanskrit scholar, the spelling of Sanskrit names and terms was a difficult task for me, but fortunately I have been guided in this and other matters by kind friends, and in this connexion I have to thank Mr. C. A. Rylands, Lecturer in Sanskrit at the School of Oriental Studies, London, and also Mr. C. E. A. W. Oldham, C.S.I., who has assisted me in passing the proofs through the Press. Mr. Rylands has kindly prepared for me a summary of the *Pūrṇa Avadāna*, which has been incorporated in the form of a footnote.

I am also indebted to Dr. L. D. Barnett for expert advice and help in the preparation of this work.

G. YAZDANI

FOREST HILL, S.E. 23

20th September, 1932

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# EXPLANATORY TEXT

## GENERAL REMARKS

### *Plates I-VI*

TO appreciate the romantic beauty of the valley where these Buddhist shrines are hewn in solid rock, the visitor must go to Ajanta immediately after the rains, when the waterfall presents a glorious spectacle, and the Waghora river attains a breadth and volume which can never be imagined in summer (*Frontispiece* and Plate II). The rich variety of trees and shrubs with their magnificent foliage and flowers adds to the charm of the landscape, and the panorama might well inspire spiritual thought and artistic expression now, as it did in the Buddhist fifteen hundred years ago.

Cave II, which forms the subject of this volume, is a *vihāra* (monastery) like Cave I, and although it is a little smaller and not so magnificent in style as the latter, it shows a richness of imagination and a love for decorative detail which are very characteristic of Indian art, and which are not so evident in the paintings of Cave I. The plans of both the *vihāras* are similar (Plate I), but the veranda of Cave II is rather narrow, having a width of 7 ft. 9 in. against a length of 46 ft. 3 in. The pillars, on the other hand, are lavishly carved, and their design is somewhat different from that of the pillars in Cave I. They are circular in form, and slightly decreasing in girth towards the top, where they are surmounted by three lotus flowers in succession, the middle one being full-blown and bell-shaped. The surface of the pillars is fluted, and the flutes being continued to the top appear like petals drooping from a flower, the effect being most artistic (Plate III). At the top of the pillars are thin abaci, and above them is an architrave which projects nearly five feet towards the front of the *vihāra*. The appearance of the façade has been spoiled by the necessary insertion of masonry columns, which we had to build recently for the support of the architrave, because it had developed a large crack. There was originally, however, no carving in the form of a frieze on the façade of the *vihāra*, but the presence of square holes cut into the rock above the line of columns indicates provision for some kind of woodwork.

The ceiling and walls of the veranda are beautifully painted, and, on account of ample daylight, colours can be studied accurately there. The artist will notice several tints of *terra verde*<sup>1</sup>, and the freshness of the blues<sup>2</sup> despite the passage of time will surprise him. Some interesting technical details may be observed as well. For example, the high lights on the noses and chins of the dark brown figures are not produced by wiping out the colour, but by applying a light yellow tint over the brown. Again, below the eye-lids of some figures, blue streaks have been painted to represent shade, which serve their purpose extremely well. The effect of roundness is produced by deepening the colours along the outline and in some places perspective is gained by the insertion of dots. All of these particulars are noticed in detail in the descriptions of the frescoes which follow this chapter.

<sup>1</sup> Finely powdered silicate containing iron.

<sup>2</sup> Ultramarine obtained from lapis lazuli.

The veranda has a chapel at each end, towards the right and left. The façades of these chapels are beautifully carved, and the figures of the *Nāga* kings with attendants, and of portly *Gaṇas* disclose fine workmanship (Plate IV). Each of these chapels has a cell at its back.

The plan of the interior of the cave can be best explained with the help of Plate I. The hall is almost square, measuring 48 ft. 4 in. by 47 ft. 7 in., and its roof is supported by twelve massive pillars, which are elaborately carved (Plate V). There are corridors on all four sides of the hall and ten cells for the accommodation of the *Bhikshus*, three being attached to each of the right and left corridors, and two to each of the front and back ones.

The shrine itself measures 14 ft. by 11 ft., and has a colossal figure of the Buddha posed in the *dharmacakra* or teaching attitude. The doorway of the shrine and antechamber are profusely carved, and the figure-sculpture shows much vivacity. The pillars of the antechamber are also exquisitely sculptured, although the figure-brackets springing from them appear to be freakish from an architectural point of view (Plate VI).

On either side of the antechamber is a chapel, the front of which is adorned with delicately carved pillars and pilasters. The chapels contain figures of *Rakshas* designed with a feeling of reverence perhaps akin to that shown in the carving of the figure of the Buddha himself. In the right chapel are *Pāñcika* and his consort *Hārītī*, while the left has two male figures, one holding a mango and the other a purse. The majesty of these two figures is at once felt. They are attended by fly-whisk bearers and fat cherubs, the latter bringing offerings.

The reader may gain an idea of the richness of the decoration of this *vihāra* from Plates V and VI, showing how Indian genius has run riot in the display of colour and form. The designs in general are highly artistic, and the thorough knowledge of the painter and the sculptor in matters of technical detail deserves the highest praise, but the lack of restraint and of nobility of thought cannot be ignored. The general impression is that of effervescence resulting from feebleness of spirit. It may be that the high ideals of self-control and breadth of vision which Buddhism had preached in earlier days were growing dim, and that the artist's mind was prepossessed with such outburst of emotion and exuberance of feeling as appear in the doctrines of later schools.

The sculpture of this *vihāra* has a considerable number of figures with four hands, among which the several *Gaṇas* on the back row of the pillars<sup>1</sup> and an ogress attacking the Buddha in the chapel on the right of the antechamber are prominent. The presence of these figures indicates a comparatively later period for the age of the *vihāra*, which view is confirmed by the inscriptions painted in this cave. Mr. J. Allan, Keeper of Coins and Medals in the British Museum, has studied these inscriptions most ably, and according to him they belong to the period 500-550 A.D.<sup>2</sup> In Part I, I have stated that the fifth century is the probable date of the frescoes of Cave I, and although there is a resemblance in one or two frescoes of that cave to the style of some of the paintings of Cave II, yet the majority of those in the former cave are different in spirit and technique from those of Cave II. In the latter cave, the artist's

<sup>1</sup> One of these *Gaṇas* is reproduced in Plate XLIX c.      <sup>2</sup> *Vide* Appendix.  
For further information, *vide infra*, pp. 53-55.

chief delight is in decoration. Whether he is depicting flowers or birds or animals or even human beings, his love of ornamentation is apparent. The beautiful lotus-flowers, the lovely geese, the richly caparisoned horses and elephants, and the charming jewellery, coiffures, and poses of the women, all show the painter's extreme fondness for adornment. In general, however, the paintings of this cave have not the nobility of treatment which characterizes such a subject as 'The Padmapāṇi' or 'The Bhikshu at a Palace Door' in the frescoes of Cave I, and from this difference one may assign an interval of fifty years between the dates of the frescoes in the two caves.

## ARHATS, KINNARAS, AND OTHER MYTHICAL BEINGS ADORING THE BODHISATTVA

### *Plate VII a-b*

*The subject is painted on the back wall of the veranda, to the left of the door. The reproduction is in colour.*

THE fresco is much damaged, but the portions which are intact show an exquisite sense of colour and a highly developed technique in the rendering of natural objects and human figures. Commencing from the left top corner, we see two celestial Sādhus (*Arhats*), apparently in the act of adoration before the Bodhisattva, whose colossal head is delineated below. The face of the *Arhat* at the extreme end shows great calm, which expression is confirmed by the position of his hand on his breast. The lobe of the left ear is elongated in a conventional fashion, an elongation apparently due to the Sādhus wearing large heavy ear-rings. In the right ear of this *Arhat* also, a large ear-ring may be seen. He is dressed in a light-green robe with stripes which have been indicated by fine white brush lines. The complexion is dark brown with a golden tinge, and the shading on the right shoulder and hand is prominent. The high lights on the nose and chin are also very marked, and a close observation of the original fresco shows that this effect has been gained by putting a whitish-yellow tint on the otherwise dark-brown colour of the face.

The other *Arhat* has his hands joined in the customary attitude of adoration, and his hair is gathered in a tuft on the top of the head, in the style of the Sādhus of the present day. He is dressed in a whitish robe, but the right arm and breast are bare. The head of this figure is too much damaged to indicate the expression of the face. The white and blue wreaths of conventional clouds will interest the artist as showing a close affinity to the Chinese and Persian renderings.

Below the figures of the *Arhats*, the fresco has almost perished, but a discerning eye may trace the outline of two heads. They are, however, too fragmentary for purposes of study.

To the right of the *Arhats*, amidst conventional hills, represented by red, green, and white blocks, are a *Yaksha* and *Yakshiṇī*, bringing offerings of lotus flowers to the Bodhisattva. These two figures have been painted with great care and feeling. The head of the *Yaksha* is unfortunately damaged, but the treatment of the other limbs, particularly of the fingers, is extremely artistic. The pose is also most graceful; he has placed one hand on the shoulder of his consort, and with the other has made a loop indicating the mystery of life or the wheel of faith, *dharmacakra*. In the delineation of the hair and the pearl jewellery the artist's skill is marvellous, the brush lines showing a fineness peculiar to Eastern art. The effect of the body being painted in the round has been produced by dark-brown washes along the outline, and a deep-green background has enhanced the perspective. On the golden-brown skin of the *Yaksha* the pearl-white jewellery looks very beautiful, and the ribbons of the hair knot flying at the back suggest an idea of movement.

The *Yakshiṇī*'s face shows amazement, evidently resulting from the vision of the Bodhisattva or the devout teaching of her consort, and it may also be noticed that a tremor has caused the fall of the blue lotus flowers from her tray of offerings and the sudden parting of her fingers. She is wearing a tight bodice (*choli*) of blue silk, the short sleeves of which are edged with strings of pearls. In the Deccan it is still a fashion among ladies to attach strings of gold beads to the short sleeves of their *cholis*. The coiffure of the *Yakshiṇī* is most artistic, and an aigrette resembling a *jhūmar* of modern times adorns her forehead.

To the right of the *Yakshiṇī* in the background, the beautiful clusters of *aśoka* (*Saraca indica*) leaves and flowers in various tints show the artist's fondness for the study of Nature. The pale brown of the decayed leaves with the light green of the young shoots and splashes of white flowers in different stages of bloom delineate admirably the variety of colour which this tree offers in spring.

Below the pair of the *Yaksha* and *Yakshiṇī*, two heavenly musicians (*kinnaras*) may be seen. They are dwarfish in size, and have the bust of a human being and the wings and tail of a bird. One of these is playing on a blue flute, while the other is apparently beating time with cymbals. The hair of the flute-player, cut short on the forehead and dressed with a matted effect, is extremely charming. The head of this figure also represents a fine piece of drawing. The wings of these quaint creatures are rather conventional, and are shown by whitish dots, but the tails are quite realistic, resembling those of the male birds of the domestic fowl.

The fresco continues towards the right, and the portion shown as part *b* of this plate is painted there.

Commencing again from the left, we see the head of a Bodhisattva whose figure was originally delineated on a colossal scale, but almost the whole of it, excepting the few fragments of the head, has perished. The richly bejewelled diadem with its fine pearl strings shows considerable artistic skill, but the subject must have become quite common so as to require no originality, as it is repeated in every representation of a prince. The eyebrows of the Bodhisattva are raised in the conventional style, and the eyes would have been meditative, but they cannot be seen in this fresco because of its damaged condition.

To the right of the Bodhisattva the artist has painted another *śoka* tree, the enthusiasm and care shown in its delineation being the same as shown in the depiction of the previous tree. The branches of this tree spread behind rocks which are shown conventionally by whitish blocks. On the rocks, two male figures of a different type of features may be seen, perhaps representing aboriginal inhabitants of India. The head of one figure is badly damaged, but that of the other, which is more or less preserved, shows sunken temples, prominent cheek-bones, a dumpy nose, and a thin moustache. The hair of the head seems to be lanky, but as it is adorned with a band of flowers, it cannot be studied closely. The stature is short, and the muscle of the left arm, in which a bow and some arrows are held, shows a developed physique.<sup>1</sup> The wooden plug placed in the hole in the lobe of the ear to prevent its closing up is interesting.

To the right of these semi-barbarous people (*Kirātas*), whom, as shown by the sculptures of Sāñchī and Amarāvātī and the early paintings of Ajanta,<sup>2</sup> Buddhism embraced in its fold, is a pair of flying figures. The female is gracefully held in the arms of her companion, who has a broader frame, and both are floating in the air, judging by the movement of their pearl jewellery. The female is wearing a long skirt of striped silk, but the upper part of her body is almost nude, the *choli* (bodice) being of transparent material. The artist has, however, adorned the bust with an abundance of pearl jewellery, splashes of which on the golden-brown skin look charming. The coal-black hair is similarly decorated with jewellery and white flowers.

Below these flying figures, along the green band, are two more figures, one of which represents an old monk. The head of the monk is bald, except for thin grey hair on the back of the skull. The body is bare to the waist, and the drawing of the shoulder and the curved back is excellent. Of the other figure, only a part of the head and a portion of the torso are visible; the rest has perished.

The artistic merits of this fresco do not fall much below those shown in the paintings of Cave I. The colour taste of the artist is exquisite, and the several groups of figures are charming, not only when judged separately, but as forming an impressive ensemble in depicting the ecstasies of the pious Buddhist.

<sup>1</sup> This figure resembles very much the figure of the Bhil studied in Part I (Text, p. 33, Plate XXX).

<sup>2</sup> Frescoes of the Chaitya Caves, Nos. 9 and 10.

# VOTARIES BRINGING OFFERINGS AND ADORING THE BUDDHA

## Plate VIII a-b

*The subject is painted on the back wall of the veranda, to the right of the door. As the fresco is much damaged, it is reproduced in monochrome only.*

ON walls adjoining the main doorway, the artists of Ajanta have invariably painted votaries, human and celestial, bringing offerings to the Buddha or adoring the Great Being. The subject of this Plate would seem to have been an attractive scene of this kind, for the few traces which remain exhibit much grace and beauty.

Near an *asoka* tree, which is admirably painted, we notice a pair of flying figures; the male figure has almost perished, but the bust of the female (*Apsaras*) is preserved, and the doubled-up arm, elbow resting on hip, and the curve of the waist, gracefully inclined in the act of flying, are veritably a *tour de force* of the Ajanta School. The body has been painted in the round, the effect being gained by washes of deeper tints. The delineation of the fingers also shows much feeling and skill, but the abundance of jewellery attracts the eyes from the charm of a gracefully developed body, which is painted almost nude.

To the right of the *Apsaras* were the figures of some votaries in the act of adoration. These have almost perished, and what is left now is the hand of a woman making a loop with her fingers, and a monk squatting on the ground with legs crossed (*b*). The drawing of the hand of the woman is exquisite, showing suppleness and feminine charm, but a greater feat is the delineation of the back of the monk, which is absolutely masterly. The care of the artist in attending to the minutest detail may be judged from the drawing of the toes of this figure.

# INDRA AND THE FOUR YAKSHAS

## Plate IX

*This subject is on the back wall of the veranda, to the right of the doorway, beyond the window in that direction. The reproduction is in colour.*

THE fresco represents seven figures, two of which, on the left side, are clad like hermits, the hair of one of them being done up in the style of the *Sādhus*. Another figure, to the right of the latter, represents a youth with long curled hair. Farther to the right is a prince dressed in a robe of brocade, and wearing a crown.<sup>1</sup> Below, in the middle, is Indra (*Śakra*) the Hundred-eyed,<sup>2</sup> one of whose eyes of wisdom is clearly indicated on his forehead. A green dwarf is wielding a *chaurī* behind him, and on the left is the head of a female figure, perhaps

<sup>1</sup> The design of the brocade, although indistinct in the reproduction, can yet be traced in the original fresco. It is a star pattern on a white background.

<sup>2</sup> 'Sakka the Hundred-eyed thou seest, for so the gods me call

When they are wont to assemble in the heavenly judgement hall.' *Jātaka* (Cambridge ed.), iv. 202.

representing his consort Śachī. The Mahāyāna School adopted many legends and deities of the contemporary cults, and this group represents the supernatural beings which are mentioned as *Yakshas* in later Buddhist literature.<sup>1</sup> The style of drawing combines vigour with grace, and the heads of Indra and of the figure behind him are admirably delineated. To show worldly majesty, the painter has given to Indra a robust physique with a very broad chest and highly developed shoulders, while his spiritual glory is expressed by high lights on the forehead, nose, and lips, and the dignified expression of the face.

The figure with curled locks behind Indra is an excellent example of modelling, which some critics have failed to notice in the paintings of Ajanta. The dark-brown washes along the chin, neck, and shoulders of this figure make it look round and detached from the background. The treatment of the hair of this figure, as well as of the green *chaurī*-bearer, shows fine brush-work. The features of the green figure are outlined in dull red in the original fresco, but they look somewhat indistinct in the reproduction.

The artist has also succeeded to a remarkable degree in producing an effect of movement in this painting. The pose of Indra and of the green *chaurī*-bearer are particularly striking in this respect.

## FLYING FIGURES, FLORAL DESIGNS, AND OTHER ARTISTIC MOTIFS

### *Plates X a-b and XI a-b*

*The subject X a is painted in the middle of the ceiling of the veranda, and X b adjoins it towards the left. Both are reproduced in colour. The figures XI a and XI b are delineated to the right of X a, and as they do not show much colour, they are reproduced in monochrome.*

THE ceiling of the veranda of this cave is painted, and shows a large variety of decorative motifs, such as flowers, fruits, birds, fantastic and sportive figures, geometric patterns, and jewellery designs. Among flowers, the lotus is prominent, and several varieties are noticed, but the large white and the blue are the loveliest. The fruits include mangos, pomegranates, and pine-apples, and are painted either as separate bunches, or shown hanging from branches in the midst of very pretty surroundings. Among the birds, parrots, geese, ducks, and cranes may be mentioned, to which the artist, in the zeal of his decorative mood, has sometimes given fanciful forms. The sportive figures include dwarfs, buffoons, jugglers, wine-bibbers, foreigners in quaint dresses, and many similar characters, all admirably portraying the artist's sense of light humour.

Apart from their decorative merits, these designs exhibit many a nice technical detail. For instance, the effect of light and shade on the skin of human figures is shown by light-yellow and dark-brown washes (Plate X a). Again, in designs in deep tints, such as dark green or

<sup>1</sup> Besides Indra, Śachī, and the green *chaurī*-bearer, the remaining four deities may be the four Lokapālas, or guardians of the four cardinal points, who dwell on Mount Kailāsa at the gates of the heaven of Indra.

They assisted at every important event in the life of the Buddha, and were present at his birth, the great renunciation and death (*parinirvāṇa*).



dark brown, the outline is marked by white dots, and to bring the subject into relief, the background has been given a still darker tint.

Among the subjects reproduced, Plate X *a* represents a quarter of the middle panel, showing a pair of flying figures amidst white and green clouds. The delineation of the female figure is extremely graceful; in one hand she holds a double string of pearls with a pendant, as an offering to the Bodhisattva, while she has placed the other hand in a most charming manner on the shoulder of her consort, apparently to support herself. Unfortunately, the heads of both figures are damaged, so the expressions of their faces cannot be studied, but the gesture of the hand of the male figure shows that he is explaining some doctrine of the faith to his consort, who is listening to him with attention, as indicated by the inclination of her head. The poses of the body and the drawing of the limbs show much artistic feeling.

Below this celestial pair, the panel has a series of decorative bands, among which may be noticed in the Plate a design of white and blue lotus creepers, intertwined and showing the flowers in various stages of bloom. The artist has marked out the petals by red lines, which have been used also to show the stamens of the small flowers. But in painting large white flowers he is more realistic, as he has shown the stamens with fine pale brush-lines, and above them has given a dark shade to indicate pollen. This fine detail has been lost in reproduction, but in the middle of the large flower darkish lines may be noticed.

A white belt separates this design from another which is rather conventional, combining floral and jewellery patterns. It is, however, most interesting to study the method of the artist, who has marked out the design in white dots on a surface of red ochre. Afterwards, to give the effect of perspective, he has given a darker shade to the background, and has inserted dashes of blue here and there to add colour to the scheme. The design, though apparently most intricate, is very easy to work out once it has been conceived.

Plate X *b* represents a few more of the large variety of designs with which the ceiling of the veranda is adorned. Among them the blue and white lotus creeper and fruits like pine-apples and pomegranates are particularly striking, and the ingenuity of the artist, the prettiness of his detail, and the purity of his colours are highly admirable.

The Plate shows three more floral designs, each of which is a gem in its own way. There is also a bunch of fruit, probably of the custard apple, but the colours given to the fruit are more fanciful than realistic.

To the right of this bunch, a greenish band representing the key pattern may also be noticed. Side by side with most elaborate scrolls, there are also very simple devices consisting of check patterns or wheel and star designs, done in black and white, probably to relieve the eye when fatigued by studying the intricate detail of the former subjects.

Interspersed in such ornamental panels of varied design are sportive figures, and the one reproduced in this Plate (X *b*) is that of a snake-charmer. He is looking upward in an attitude of feigned carelessness, while with his hand he is holding the neck of a hooded cobra, which stands erect from a basket. The crouching pose of the charmer, with one knee bent to the ground, apparently suggests alertness in playing with the snake, but as the head of the figure is damaged, the comic effect of the expression of his face cannot be fully appreciated.

The artist's love of humour is better illustrated in subjects XI *a* and *b*. In the former, we see a pair of wine-bibbers, one of whom is apparently a foreigner, as shown by his features and dress. His sunken cheeks and the tuft of beard on his chin have given him a somewhat comic appearance, and although he is offering a cup of wine to his boon companion, the latter, judging by the gesture of his hand, feels more inclined to pull his beard than to take the cup. The dress of the foreigner is also more or less in the style of the jokers of the present day. He is wearing a conical skull cap with a tassel, which is seen hanging behind his head. The coat and trousers are tight, and on his feet are socks with flaring blue stripes. A scarf appears to be tied round the neck, for its borders are seen flying at the back of the figure.

The other figure is dressed in the same style, but his features present a great contrast to those of the foreigner. The former appears to be an inhabitant of Magadhadeśa, while the latter evidently hails from Bactria or some other neighbouring country. In the palmy days of Ajanta, votaries would have assembled there from different Buddhist countries, and the artist found ample material for his fantastic studies in the variety of their features and the quaintness of their manners and dresses. In this subject the thick, flowing moustache of the Bihārī and his plump oval face are as typical as the thin moustache, sunken cheeks, and scanty beard of the Bactrian.

The other subject in this Plate (XI *b*) represents two pot-bellied friends of dwarfish size, both being in a serio-comic mood. The figure on the right is making a loop with his fingers to denote the *dharmacakra* or the riddle of life. His companion does not understand the significance of the symbol, and in joke has protruded his middle finger, as vulgar people are apt to do in India to this day. The style in which the *aṅgachhā* (scarf) is worn round the shoulders by the right figure is very characteristic of the practice of the Bihārī and Oṛiya Brāhmins even now.

## THE EXILE OF A LADY: NOT IDENTIFIED

### Plates XII-XIV

*Of these three plates, the subject of Plate XII (a-b) is painted on the left wall of the chapel at the right end of the veranda. The scene of Plate XIII is on the back wall of the same chapel, to the left of the cell door, and the subject of Plate XIV is depicted on the right wall of the chapel. As the frescoes of this chapel are badly damaged, they are reproduced in monochrome only.*

THE *Jātaka* depicted in these frescoes has not been identified as yet, but the scenes reproduced in Plates XII and XIII show a lady in exile with two robbers, or executioners, and the birth in the jungle of a child who is ultimately thrown into a lotus-pond. The various incidents have been depicted with great pathos, and though the frescoes are badly damaged, yet the skill and vision of the artist cannot escape notice.

Beginning at the left, we notice a Bodhisattva in the *bhūmiśparśa mudrā*,<sup>1</sup> his right hand hanging low towards the earth. The features are refined, and the expression of the face shows that he is occupied in deep thought. He is sitting on a throne, but the hermit's girdle for the

<sup>1</sup> For information regarding the various *mudrās*, or attitudes, see *Ajanta*, i. 34 (footnote 2).

support of the back and legs is seen round his knees, apparently to indicate that he is meditating.<sup>1</sup> The feet of the Bodhisattva rest upon a low stool, whose supports in the form of tigers' paws are interesting for their design. The check-pattern with stars at the corners on the cloth of the cushion is pleasing to the eye. To the left of the Bodhisattva is an attendant dressed in a green robe like a monk, while on his right is a *dāsī* (female servant), wielding a fly-whisk. The scene is depicted in a pavilion, similar to the 'perfumed chamber' of the Buddhist stories.<sup>2</sup> The pavilion is apparently built in a higher part of the royal abode or monastery, for we notice below a line of *caitya*-windows and carved railing, indicating the lower apartments of the building.

Outside the pavilion, towards the right, we notice a large palanquin which is being carried on the shoulders of four attendants. The design of the palanquin is like that of the upper part of an Indian bullock-cart—a semicircular bamboo frame-work resting on a base of wooden planks. In this case, two strong bamboos are attached to the bottom as well, one on each side, and projecting at the ends of the palanquin to allow the bearers to lift it up and carry it. The top frame of the palanquin is apparently covered with cloth, and there are horizontal, vertical, and diagonal bands showing decorative work.

In front of the palanquin, and above the palanquin-bearers, are two figures representing monks, one of whom is a youngish man with very fine features. The head of the other monk is damaged, but his heavy jaw and large wheel-pattern ear-rings are still very prominent.

The second episode of the story, Plate XII *b*, represents a scene in the jungle. Commencing from the left, we notice two figures, one of whom is a stalwart man of green complexion with very fierce looks. The features of his companion are obliterated, but his frizzled woolly hair is suggestive of his wild temper, and further, he holds a blue poniard in his right hand and a cup or tray in his left. At the feet of these two ruffians, who are either robbers or executioners commissioned by the king to murder the lady inside the palanquin, we notice a figure lying prostrate, as if beseeching for the life of the lady. The fresco is badly damaged here, but the curve of the back of the prostrate figure can be discerned.

In the middle of the painting is a tree of colossal size with dark-green foliage, below which the palanquin has been placed. Three ladies may be seen, one of whom is lying on her left side, apparently seized with acute pain, and another is either rubbing some ointment on her back, or tying a bandage round her waist. Something like the roll of a bandage may be noticed near the waist of the lady who is lying down. The third lady is still inside the palanquin, but her figure is visible through the opening. Her emotion in this situation may be observed from the gesture of her hand. Near the lady who is seized with pain, there is another figure lying flat, with face turned to the ground, evidently through excessive sorrow. The long full-sleeved coat and belt show the figure to be that of a man. The fresco is much damaged, but the few pieces which remain exhibit fine technique in the rounding of forms, and in the delineation of plants with their rich foliage and abundance of flowers.

In the third episode, the scene changes to a delightful lotus-pond, at the edge of which the palanquin is placed, and we notice the green-complexioned ruffian and also the newly born

<sup>1</sup> *Ajanta*, i. 19 (text).

<sup>2</sup> See Warren's *Buddhism in Translations*, pp. 91-5.

baby, who has been set afloat in a cradle on the waters of the lotus-pond, probably by the ruffian. A lady is sitting in a pensive mood in front of the palanquin. She is evidently the mother of the child, and is smitten with grief at the loss of her baby. The painting of the lady is indeed a masterpiece (Plate XIII *b*), and shows what high standards of grace and beauty in the treatment of female figures the artists of Ajanta attained.

Below this scene we see a *Nāga* king with an elaborate halo of seven hoods, and two *Nāgīs*, apparently his consorts, and two more female figures. The *Nāgas* being spirits often dwelling in lakes,<sup>1</sup> it appears that their king has been touched by the grief of the mother, or struck with amazement at the sight of a lovely child floating in the pond, and he has rescued the babe. The fresco is very much damaged in this part, and it is possible that the conjecture about the *Nāga* king rescuing the child may not be correct, and that the scene with the *Nāga* figures belongs to another story.

As the frescoes on the other walls of this chapel are also much damaged, it can only be conjectured that the previous story has been continued on them. However, on the back wall, to the right of the cell door, the outlines of one white and one pink elephant can be made out, as well as the figure of a horse. The fresco on the right wall of the chapel is, comparatively speaking, better preserved, and we notice a court scene in which a *rājā* is shown sitting on a throne. He is wearing an elaborate crown and rich jewellery, which are in keeping with the Indian ideals of the dignity of a king. The *rājā* holds a fruit (a mango?) in his right hand.

On the left of the *rājā* is the figure of a youth, who is either saluting with both hands joined and raised towards the forehead, or announcing in a respectful manner the arrival of some important personage, for a great cavalcade waits outside the royal pavilion. Behind the youth two elephants may be seen, the heads and trunks of which are excellently drawn. The fine brush-lines depicting the folds of the skin of the lower elephant's trunk are very ingeniously painted. On this animal we notice two figures, apparently of ladies. The bodice of the lady riding in front is very striking on account of its collar and breast bands. She is holding a disk (a shield?) in her left hand, while in her right hand is either a sword or a goad for urging on the elephant. The lady behind her is holding a sword (or a dagger) in her right hand, with the point of the weapon downward. Below the figures of these two ladies, two male figures may be made out, probably of attendants. One of them is dressed in a long coat with tight sleeves. The cloth of the coat has a circular design on it.

On the neck of the upper elephant a stalwart male figure may be noticed, but the head of this figure is broken. Between the heads of the two elephants, the head and tusk of a third elephant with a rider may also be traced. These figures are too much damaged to study further.

If the subject of this fresco is to be connected with the story of the 'Exile of the Lady', the scene will represent the honourable return of the lady to her father's palace, with her consort and the child who is now grown up.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Ajanta*, i. 11-12 (footnote 2).

<sup>2</sup> The walls of the left chapel of the veranda also had frescoes which, except for a few tiny pieces scattered here and there, have almost completely perished. The pieces surviving now are described in the Appendix in connexion with the inscriptions which have been noticed on them.

# STORY OF THE GOLDEN GOOSE: *MAHĀHARSA JĀTAKA*

## *Plates XV-XVI*

*The story is delineated on the left wall of the front gallery of the vihāra; the two lotus-lake scenes are on the two sides of the cell door and the two palace scenes are above it. As the fresco has been much blackened by the smoke and heat of a fire, so that the colours have perished, it is reproduced in monochrome only.*

THE story of the Great Being as the Golden Goose, Dhṛitarāshṭra, with slight variations, forms the subject of three *Jātakas* (Nos. 502, 533, and 534).<sup>1</sup> The version delineated at Ajanta has four episodes. In the first, we notice a lake, the waters of which, almost black, are covered with dark green leaves of the lotus (Plate XV *a*). In the reproduction, however, it is impossible to make out the circular design of the leaves, for on account of smoke and fire, the surface of the original fresco has become extremely dark, and it is difficult to discern the green patterns of the leaves on the waters even in the original fresco. But the skill and exquisite taste of the artist may still be admired from the variety of lotus flowers and the green shoots of the creepers which are springing from the rocks adjoining the lake.

In the water are two human figures, one of them apparently the fowler, and the other some important official of the palace, for his features are highly refined, and he is seen to be occupying a prominent position in the other episodes of the story as well. He has a sword hanging behind his left shoulder, as indicated by the black leather strap on his arm.<sup>2</sup> The serenity of his face and the gesture of his hand indicate that he is occupied in deep thought, caused by the sight of the two lovely geese which are floating towards the fowler. The figure of the

<sup>1</sup> The main theme of the story is as follows: 'Queen Khemā, wife of Saṃyama, the Rājā of Benares, saw in a dream that some gold-coloured geese alighted at the Royal Palace, and with the most sweet voices preached the Law. The sermon of the miraculous birds charmed the queen, and when she awoke she expressed to the rājā her anxiety to listen to the real preaching of the golden geese. The rājā took counsel with his ministers, who told him that there were golden geese on Cittakūṭa in the Himālaya, and that by a stratagem they would attract them to their city and catch them. The rājā was pleased to hear that, and at the suggestion of his ministers he had a beautiful lake dug in the north of Benares, and planted five kinds of lotus, and scattered different varieties of grain to ensnare the birds. He also appointed a fowler to watch over the lake, and to catch the golden geese when they alighted there. The news of the beauty of the lake and the safety of its waters spread among the bird world, and the flock of golden geese, when apprised of it, told their captain, Sumukha, to ask the king to go over to the lake and feed there. The goose-king, whose name was Dhataratṭha, on hearing the request of his flock, observed, "The haunts of men are dangerous, let not this approve itself to you". But as they importuned further, he agreed to their

request and flew to the lake. On alighting from the air the goose-king placed his foot in a snare which the fowler had set to capture the bird. Sumukha, on noticing his chief's plight, was much distressed, and addressed the fowler appealingly:

"I should not care to live myself, if this my friend were dead,

Content with one, let him go free, and eat my flesh instead.

We two are much the same in age, in length and breadth of limb,

No less for thee if thou shouldst take me in exchange for him."

The fowler's heart was touched by the words of Sumukha, and he released the goose-king, but both birds asked him to take them to the rājā, lest he deprive him of the reward which he had won. When presented to the rājā, Dhataratṭha and Sumukha instructed him in Law, and the craving of Queen Khemā was appeased. Afterwards the two geese left the rājā and the queen, and set out for Cittakūṭa.'

*Jātaka* (Cambridge ed.), iv. 264-7 and v. 178-202.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Ajanta*, i, Plate XXXI.

latter has become almost black, but his outstretched hand may be noticed, denoting his anxiety to receive the miraculous birds. The colours of the wings of the geese, if there were any originally, are bleached now, evidently by the effect of fire;<sup>1</sup> but the fine brush-work is intact in some places, and may be admired in the treatment of the tail feathers of the birds.

Higher up, towards the left, we notice the figure of the palace official again, standing behind the range of conventional rocks. Lower down, towards the right, amidst the foliage of an *āsoka* tree, the fowler is seen carrying the two geese, one in each hand. The figure of the fowler has become little more than a dark daub, and is difficult to make out in the reproduction. The two geese are, however, clear, and their bleached figures can be seen. According to the story, they are now being taken to the palace to appease the craving of Queen Khemā.

The delicate delineation of the *āsoka* tree, with its white flowers, young green leaf-shoots, and tender pinkish stems will interest the artist.

The second episode is represented on Plate XVIa, where we notice a large goose, King Dhṛitarāshṭra, sitting on a throne, the feet of which seem to have been turned on a lathe. The wings of the Goose-King were originally painted of a golden colour, to tally with the story, but on account of the effect of fire the wings have become black now. By the side of the throne on which Dhṛitarāshṭra is seen, there is another throne occupied by the other goose, Sumukha, the captain of the flock of golden geese. The feet of the latter throne are visible, but on account of the blackening of the fresco, the figure of Sumukha cannot be made out. According to the story, the two divine birds are instructing Saṁnyama, the Rājā of Benares, and his consort Khemā, in the mysteries of the Law. The outline of the back and shoulder of Queen Khemā may be noticed in the reproduction,<sup>2</sup> but the other figures are obscure. In the original fresco, however, Rājā Saṁnyama and some of his attendants can be discerned. The rājā is shown sitting on a cushion in an attitude of adoration, with both hands joined together, and raised towards the Divine Goose.

Behind the rājā, near the door, is a figure draped in white, and making a loop (*dharma-cakra*) with the fingers of the right hand. There are three more figures near the rājā, one of which, pinkish in colour, has placed his right hand on the palm of his left. The artist, by this gesture, apparently means to show the earnestness of the figure in following the sermon of the divine bird. The gestures of the other two figures cannot be made out, and the head of one of them is broken, though it may be seen that he is wearing pearl jewellery.

The third episode is painted to the right of the second, and although the fresco is as dark here as in the previous episode, yet some figures can be made out. The scene lies in a royal court room. Commencing from the left, we notice a stalwart door-keeper leaning on a long stick. He is dressed in a long white coat with tight sleeves, the cuffs of the coat being either embroidered in the style of uniforms, or made of a different material, for they do not match with the cloth of the garment.

Not far from the door-keeper, towards the right, is the rājā, who can be easily identified

<sup>1</sup> Fire has burnt the colours almost completely, except the white, which is well preserved, but has been somewhat bleached.

<sup>2</sup> The frilled ends of the ribbons of Queen Khemā will strike the fancy of the painter.

by his elaborate crown. In front of him, at the opposite end of the room, is the Bodhisattva (?) in the *dharmacakra* (teaching) attitude. The head of the Bodhisattva is broken, but his majesty can be perceived by the grandeur of his throne, the back of which shows chased gold work. The foot-rest is also highly ornamented, and the presence of a blue lotus flower on a tray<sup>1</sup> perhaps suggests that he is the divine Bodhisattva, Padmapāṇi.<sup>2</sup>

Between the Bodhisattva and the rājā there are two other figures, sitting on raised seats, with feet placed on the ground. They are probably the ministers of the rājā, and the one nearest the Bodhisattva seems to be the official who was seen in the lotus-lake scene with the fowler (Plate XV a). The rājā, as well as his two ministers, have made loops with their fingers, apparently to indicate that they are following the sermon of the Bodhisattva on the 'riddle of life'.

The artist originally painted the palms of the hands and soles of the feet of these figures in a lighter colour than the rest, as they would appear naturally. But as the colours have been scorched, and the lime-white which was the principal ingredient in the light tint of the palms and soles has been bleached, the result is that the latter look absolutely white, while the general complexion of the skins is jet-black, the whole presenting a quaint black and white effect.

Behind the throne of the Bodhisattva is a *chaurī*-bearer, and towards the right, near the foot of the throne, are two ladies of noble bearing, one of whom is apparently Queen Khemā. She is looking up towards the Bodhisattva, and the artist, to indicate her feelings of amazement at the sermon of the Bodhisattva, has placed her forefinger on her chin—a significant gesture, which is very characteristic of the women of India even to-day. In her left hand she holds a sword which, perhaps, refers to some incident of the story not mentioned in the *Jātaka* versions. The miracle of the Golden Goose assuming the human form while teaching the Law to the Rājā of Benares and Queen Khemā also does not occur in the *Jātaka* version.

The artist has shown great skill and imagination in the delineation of the figures of the two ladies, who are perfectly charming, both in grace of form and in sweetness of expression. The artist's love of decorative detail may also be noticed in the exquisite treatment of the handle and hair of the fly-whisk, and in the flowing lines of the design of the curtain which covers the wall behind the figures of the ministers.

In the fourth episode, the scene, like the first, lies in the lotus-lake, which is again most beautifully painted. The left portion of the fresco has almost perished, but in what remains the artist's close study of bird and plant life must be highly admired. The different kinds of lotus flowers<sup>3</sup> and different stages of their bloom have been exquisitely drawn, and the delineation of the geese, five of which may be noticed, is equally ingenious and charming.

In the upper part of the fresco are hills represented by conventional bands. On a ledge bordering the lake, Queen Khemā is seen watching the graceful movements of the golden geese in the lotus-pool. By her side, towards the right, her sword is fixed in the ground.

<sup>1</sup> According to Getty, if the *padma* is in the vase it represents the union of the Spiritual and the Material, see *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*, p. 192.

<sup>2</sup> For the Bodhisattva Padmapāṇi, see *Ajanta*, i. 27 (footnote 2).

<sup>3</sup> In the *Jātaka* stories five kinds are mentioned.

Near the handle of the sword her shield may also be seen suspended from a leather strap fixed to the rock. The design of the buckle of the strap<sup>1</sup> and the handle of the shield are worth noticing. Because of the destruction of some parts of the fresco the figure of Queen Khemā is much damaged, but the portion which remains shows a charming study of the female beauty of India, in the grace of the pose, the fine contour of the bust, the suppleness of the limbs, and the subtle charm of a scanty dress combined with a profusion of gems and choice jewellery.

Near Queen Khemā, towards the left, was the figure of the palace official who is seen with the fowler in subject XV *a*. In this fresco his figure has almost completely perished, though portions of the head, right arm, waist, and feet may be traced. The hair is decorated with flowers and shows an elaborate style of coiffure for men.

## THE *YAKSHAS* AND *YAKSHINĪS*

### *Plates XVII<sub>a</sub> and XVIII<sub>a</sub>*

*These two subjects are painted on the pilaster between the front and left galleries. The frescoes are much damaged, so they have been reproduced in monochrome only.*

THE subject on the left side of the pilaster (Plate XVII *a*) represents a *Yakshiṇī* (? or a *rānī*) and her attendant, the latter of whom is carrying a tray of flowers as an offering to the Buddha. The delineation of the attendant is graceful and shows much artistic feeling. The head is unfortunately broken, but the pose with the slight curve of the back, the left arm hanging loosely at her side, and the slight forward movement of the left leg, is perfectly charming. The skill of the artist may be seen at its best in his drawing of the left arm in the round with all the feminine grace of suppleness and beauty of form. The fingers of both hands show not only the sensitive nature of the lady, but a high regard for elegance. The nails almost look as though they were manicured. The dress and ornaments of this lady are equally well portrayed. To contrast with her coal-black hair, she has strings of brilliant pearls round her forehead and at the parting of her hair. Her large wheel-pattern ear-rings serve to accentuate her emotional nature. She wears a pearl necklet round her beautiful throat and a string of pearls on her bosom. Her arms and wrists are similarly bedecked with ornaments. All her jewels are simple and beautiful in their design, and show none of the vulgarity of over-elaboration.

The dress has three pieces only. There is a tight bodice, over which is a tunic of pleasing design, slit for almost the entire length at the sides to give freedom of movement, and so exposing the charm of the waist.<sup>2</sup> The third piece of the dress is either a skirt (*lahaṅgā*) or *sārī*. It is tight enough to indicate elegantly the roundness of the figure.

The figure of the *Yakshiṇī* (? or *rānī*) has been badly damaged. The head, except for the flower-decorated hair, is completely gone. The bust and lower part of the body have also been injured, but the charm of the pose and the skill of the drawing can still be conceived from what

<sup>1</sup> The design of the buckle is identical with that noticed in the subject reproduced in *Ajanta*, i, Plate XXXI.

<sup>2</sup> For a tunic of similar style, but with long sleeves, see *Ajanta*, i, Plate XIII.



remains. The artist has shown her in a tight kirtle, and to attract attention to the grace of her form has encased the lower part of the body in a network of pearls.

The other subject (Plate XVIII *a*) is painted on the front of the pilaster, and represents a *Yaksha* (? or a *rājā*) and his consort. The poses of both these figures show ease combined with grace. The *Yaksha* is squatting with legs crossed, and his elbows resting on them. His right arm is bent, and he has made a loop with his forefinger and thumb, while the palm of his hand is exposed, and the gesture of his other fingers indicates absorption in deep thought. The left hand of the *Yaksha* is hanging towards the ground in an indifferent manner, perhaps to confirm the impression given of a meditative mood. The head of the figure is broken, so that the expression of the face cannot be studied. The drawing of the waist, showing the curves of the muscles in a slightly inclined pose, is realistic. Among the ornaments the design of the buckle-pattern chain round the neck of the *Yaksha* is worthy of notice.

The *Yakshinī* is sitting with her legs almost doubled up. In her hands she holds a musical instrument, over which she has gracefully bent her head while she plays. The head of this figure also is damaged, but when intact must have been one of the most charming of the pictures of women at Ajanta. The part which remains shows an almost round face with full lips and delicate chin. The subtle beauty of the curls of the hair has been indicated by fine brush-lines along the temple and on the crown and back of the head. Among her ornaments the designs of the small ear-rings and of the *kaṅgans* (bracelets) are interesting as they are still in fashion among the agricultural classes of India. The musical instrument is probably one with strings, for the position of her left hand shows that she is playing on them. The thumb of her right hand has come out through a hole in the lower part of the instrument, and she has made a loop (*dharmacakra*) with it and her middle finger, apparently to show that she is playing a tune in harmony with the religious mood of her consort.

## THE BIRTH OF THE BUDDHA

### *Plates XVIIIb-XXIII*

*The subject is painted in several scenes on the wall of the left corridor, above and along the sides of the first and second cell-doors. The two scenes, the Interpretations of Mahā-Māyā's dream by the Brāhmins, and the Birth of the Buddha in the Lumbinī Gardens, which are, comparatively speaking, better preserved, have been reproduced in colour. From the former scene the figure of the princess (Mahā-Māyā?) is reproduced on a larger scale also as a separate colour plate. The remaining episodes of the story are reproduced in monochrome.*

THE birth of the Buddha, like the Nativity, is associated with a number of tales and legends describing the miraculous incidents which took place on the auspicious occasion.<sup>1</sup> Several of them have been painted by the artists of Ajanta. Commencing from the left side of the first cell-door, we notice a lady (Mahā-Māyā) lying on her left side on a couch. The upper part of the figure is much injured, but a part of the head and the left elbow and hand

<sup>1</sup> The incidents described in the Introduction to the *Jātaka* (ed. by V. Fausbøll, 1877-91) may be summed up as follows: Before the birth of the Buddha a great uproar took place and the gods of all the thousand worlds waited on the Future Buddha, who was then dwelling in the Tuṣṭita heaven, and said to him, 'Sire, the time and fit

can be made out. The lower part of her body is, comparatively speaking, better preserved, and shows her wearing a long skirt of striped material. Below the couch, in front, are four female attendants, all in a pensive mood. The coiffure, jewellery, and beautiful limbs of these figures are admirably delineated.

On the other side of the couch, near the feet of the lady, is another attendant, holding a triangular object. It may be a harp, because, according to the story, Queen Mahā-Māyā was taking part in the merriment of the Midsummer Festival when she fell asleep and dreamed of her conception. Just above the right side of Mahā-Māyā is a circular white object, which may represent the elephant of the story, 'striking Mahā-Māyā on the right side when entering her womb'.

The story seems to have been continued in the upper part of the fresco, as we notice another chamber in which a rānī is talking to her consort. She is evidently Mahā-Māyā relating the dream to King Śuddhodana. The pose of the rānī is most graceful, and reminiscent of the pose of Sīvalī in the Mahājanaka Jātaka scene of Cave I.<sup>1</sup> As the technique and artistic detail of several other figures of this subject resemble those of the Mahājanaka Jātaka, it appears either that the same person painted both, or that they belonged to a common school.

season for your Buddhahip has now arrived'. The Great Being assented to their wish and pointed out the time, the continent, the country, and the family regarding his birth. Concerning the family he observed: 'I will be born into a warrior family, and King Śuddhodana of Kapilavatthu shall be my father and Queen Mahā-Māyā my mother.' The events took place as the Great Being had foretold, and at the time of the Midsummer Festival Queen Mahā-Māyā saw in a dream that the four guardian angels came and lifted up her couch and took it to a golden mansion on the Silver Hill. There they showed reverence to her, and having cleansed her from every human stain anointed her with perfumes, and clothed her in divine garments. Afterwards a white elephant entered the golden mansion, and walking thrice round the couch of Mahā-Māyā, he struck her on the right side and entered her womb. When the queen awoke, she told the dream to the king, who asked Brāhmins for the interpretation. They observed that the queen had conceived a male child, who, when born, if he continued to live the household life, would become a Universal Monarch, but if he left the household life, would become the Buddha, and roll back the clouds of sin and folly of this world.

Now the instant the Buddha was conceived, the Thirty-two Prognostics (miracles) appeared, and four angels with swords in their hands kept guard on Mahā-Māyā to ward off all harm from her. When ten months had passed, Mahā-Māyā grew desirous of going home to her relatives, and said to King Śuddhodana: 'Sir, I should like to meet my kinsfolk in their city Devadaha'. The

king readily agreed to the wish of the queen, and had the road from Kapilavatthu to the city of Devadaha made even, and decorated it with plantain-trees, banners, and streamers. Afterwards he seated the queen in a palanquin borne by a thousand of his courtiers, and sent her away in great pomp. When the procession reached a beautiful grove of *sāl*-trees, called Lumbinī Grove, the queen felt desirous of disporting herself in that lovely environment. She alighted from the palanquin, and walked down to a magnificent *sāl*-tree. As she took hold of one of its beautiful branches, the pains suddenly came upon her, and the child was born while she was standing up. Four Mahā-Brahma angels appeared at the moment, and placing the divine babe in a golden net, they presented him to the guardian angels, who received him and presented him in turn to men who let him out of their hands on to the ground, where he stood and faced the east. The many thousand worlds lay before him like an open court, and their denizens greeted him: 'Great Being! There is none your equal, much less your superior.' When he had in this manner surveyed the four cardinal points, and the four intermediate ones, and the zenith and the nadir, and had nowhere discovered his equal, he exclaimed, 'This is the best direction', and strode forward seven paces, followed by Mahā-Brahma holding over him the white umbrella, and by other divinities bearing symbols of royalty in their hands. At the seventh stride he halted, and shouted the cry of victory: 'The chief am I in all the worlds.' *Vide Warren's Buddhism in Translations*, pp. 38-44.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Ajanta*, i, Plates XVI-XVII.

The rājā is seated upon a cushion, and has a round bolster behind his back for support. The cover of the bolster is of a striped material which is frequently noticed in the paintings of Ajanta. The figure of the rājā is damaged, so that the expression of his face cannot be studied, but the position of his hands indicates that he is in the *dharmacakra* attitude. Behind the rājā is a *chaurī*-bearer of a fair complexion. She has rather a stout figure, as indicated by her plump face and the folds of skin on her throat.

In Plate XIX the scene lies in a court room with beautifully painted pillars and awnings decorated with pearl strings. In the middle a dark prince is seen, whose figure seems to be somewhat wooden in appearance, probably because of the painter's posing him face to face with himself without the least inclination of the body. The drawing of the upper part of the body is not bad; the arms and wrists are well modelled, and the fingers are exquisitely shaped. The features also show refinement, but the legs are very poorly drawn, and mar the general effect.

The prince is nude down to his waist, in the royal style,<sup>1</sup> but he is wearing an elaborate crown and a great amount of jewellery, consisting of ear-rings, a necklet (*kaṇṭhī*), a jewelled collar (*torā*), several strings of pearls (*hār* or *mālā*), armlets (*bāzūband*), wristlets (*kaṅgan*), bangles (*karā*), and rings (*aṅgūṭhī*). The back of the throne on which the prince is sitting is also highly ornamented and shows chased gold work.

The hands of the prince show him to be in the teaching attitude, and as he occupies the place of honour in the scene, and as great reverence and adoration are being shown to him by the other figures, he may be identified with the Future Buddha, who before his birth, according to the story, was dwelling in the Tuṣita heaven surrounded by deities. The aureole painted round his head further shows that he is a celestial being. The octagonal design of the foot-rest of the Future Buddha is interesting.

On either side of the Future Buddha are two minor deities wearing crowns and sitting on cushions. The artist seems to have been at a loss in giving different features to these figures, so the pair on the right is almost a copy of that on the left. The features and pose of the two extreme figures, which are of a dark complexion, are, however, very refined, and the manner in which they are looking towards the face of the Future Buddha indicates feelings of hope and devotion. In contrast to these, the other two deities have rather sullen faces. The head of one figure is inclined to the right, and that of the other to the left.

Behind the throne of the Future Buddha are also two *chaurī*-bearers, one of a light brown complexion and the other of a dark complexion.

The work of the artist in this fresco betrays a lack of creative effort, which may in part be due to his mind being obsessed by the religious character of the theme. In the next subject, which deals with the interpretation of the dream of Mahā-Māyā,<sup>2</sup> he exhibits a fine conception and great vivacity of spirit, and his delineation of Māyā in a standing position is perhaps the best example of the Art of Ajanta during a period when richness of detail and beauty of finish were its salient features.

To describe the subject in detail. We notice a rājā and a rānī (Śuddhodana and Mahā-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Ajanta*, i. 28.

<sup>2</sup> This is painted to the right of the previous subject between the first and second cell-doors.

Māyā) sitting on a throne. The delineation of both these figures is exquisite, the outline being firm, the limbs well modelled, and the colouring beautiful. To a stern critic, some parts of the figure of Mahā-Māyā may betray a lack of proportion. For example, the relation of the girth of the arm to the well-developed bust might be criticized. But in such cases Indian artists have always been carried away by idealistic perceptions of beauty, and do not attach much attention to their proportion in natural form. The general effect is, however, not marred by these exaggerations, and the figure on the whole is a superb piece of Indian art, showing fine conception, perfect technique, and highly developed decorative sense. The slight inclination of the head, combined with the curves of the arm and the waist, has resulted in a wonderful pose, while the black coils of her hair and pearl jewellery, adding warmth and lustre to the soft brown skin, present a delightful colour effect.

The expressions on the faces of Mahā-Māyā and Śuddhodana show that they are listening with rapt attention to the interpretation of the dream by the chief Brāhman, who is sitting on a low square stool (*chaukī*) in front of them. The features of this figure are very typical, and the long twisted moustache and the shaven forehead may still be noticed among the influential Brāhmanas of Benares. He has made a loop with his fingers; the artist by this gesture probably wants to suggest that he is interpreting the dream in the light of religious law (*dharmacakra*). Below the figure of the Brāhman there is another dressed like a hermit (*Bhikshu*). His features are somewhat coarse; but the head is too much damaged for a close study.

Behind the rānī is a female attendant (*dāsī*) bearing a *chaurī*. Her complexion is fairish, and a circular decorative mark (*bindī*) is prominent on her forehead.<sup>1</sup> There is another female attendant sitting below the throne of the rānī and looking towards the Brāhman. The features of this attendant are somewhat difficult to make out.

Between the rājā and the Brāhman, there are two figures, one of whom is almost behind his throne. This latter is of a fair complexion, and the style of his (or her?) cap indicates that he is a foreigner. He is holding in his hands a round object which he has brought to offer to the king and queen. The material of the lower garment of this figure has a striped design in which ducks are worked. The other figure has a dark complexion, and she is carrying presents in both hands. The pose and delineation of the head of this figure are very beautiful.

To the right of the pavilion in which the rājā and rānī are sitting, there is a pillared apartment in which a princess royal is seen leaning against a column. She is apparently Māyā, whose beauty the artist wanted to delineate with the free play of his imagination, without the restrictions imposed by the incidents of the story. Here she is seen attended by a female servant, dressed in a long garment covering her bust in the style of a hermit's robe. The features of this attendant are partly obliterated and look rather coarse now, the mouth being contorted. The other figure in the apartment represents a dwarfish Brāhman, holding a rosary and looking at the face of the Princess with an air of amazement.

The dominating figure in the apartment, however, is the Princess herself, in depicting

<sup>1</sup> The features of this figure confirm the guess that the subject Mahājanaka Jātaka reproduced on Plate VII, artist who painted this subject is the same who painted vol. i.

whose bodily charm the painter has exhibited his highest skill. That the beauty of her slender figure and slim limbs may be best appreciated, he has chosen for the Princess a standing pose, and to add naturalness and ease, he has made her lean gracefully against a pillar. A sweet inclination of the head shows the charm of the beautiful neck and shoulders to advantage, while the fine contours of the bust and of the lower part of the body are modulated rhythmically by a poetically thin waist.

The painter has taken special delight in the decoration of the hair, and jewels and flowers have been most ingeniously used to add to the subtle charm of the dark coils. Her dress is scanty, consisting only of a tight bodice of gauze, and a close-fitting knee-length garment of red silk. But her dress appears less scanty than it is, because of the profusion of jewellery, which is chiefly of pearls. The latter match admirably with the dark brown tint of the skin, and when falling in strings on the bosom, or in net-work on the waist and around the knees, they bring into prominence the beauty of those parts of the body.

The calm and serenity of the face have given a mystic effect to the subject, and the idea of voluptuousness which is contrary to the Buddhist doctrine is happily avoided. She has made a loop with her thumb and middle finger, probably to signify that she is contemplating the riddle of life. It is interesting to note how the Indian artist, with his rich imagination and keen sense of beauty, under the esoteric teachings of the Buddhist doctrine, acquired a temperament which experiences joy only when the outward life is governed by an inner law. In all the outbursts of his emotions and fancy the spiritual note is prominent, and it is this feature especially which differentiates the Buddhist art of India from the art of that country when influenced by other cults.

The next scene of this subject (Plate XXII) represents the birth of the Buddha in the Lumbinī Grove. Mahā-Māyā is seen standing in the middle holding the branch of the *sāl*-tree.<sup>1</sup> In front of her are Brahma, Indra, a *chaurī*-bearer, and a hermit, representing the four pure-minded Mahā-Brahma angels of the *Jātaka*, who received the Buddha on a golden net at his birth.<sup>2</sup> In the fresco the child is held on a mattress by Indra, who is easily identified by his eye of wisdom. Brahma is holding an umbrella, the symbol of royalty, over the divine child, to show his sovereignty of all the worlds. The fly-whisk and the pearl-string<sup>3</sup> held by the other two angels are also emblematic of the supreme nature of the Great Being.

Behind Māyā are two female attendants, the one holding a *chaurī* having very peculiar features. Her hair is dressed in the style of the Sādhvī, but the knot is on one side of the head instead of being tied at the crown. Near the feet of Māyā is a dwarf presenting offerings on a tray. The figure of the dwarf is damaged, and the head not fully visible now.

<sup>1</sup> The branch is decorated with bangles, probably with the feeling that such adornment was worthy of the deity dwelling in the tree, the branch representing the hand of the deity. A necklace and a drum which convey similar ideas may also be noticed on the tree.

<sup>2</sup> The hair of each of the four deities is treated differently. The hair of the Mahā-Brahma is done up in the style of the *jatā* of a Sādhvī. Indra has luxuriant locks

which are spread in a princely style on his shoulders. The hair of the *chaurī*-bearer is not very long, but shows beautiful curls on the temple and neck, and seems to be parted in the middle. The fourth deity, holding the pearl-string, has a tuft on the crown, and a fringe of matted tresses on the neck.

<sup>3</sup> It may be a rosary, and its presentation may signify the future devout life of the Buddha.

Below these figures, in the foreground, may be seen a line of lotus-flowers, which grew up at every step when the divine child took the seven strides immediately after his birth to declare his sovereignty of the world.<sup>1</sup> Farther to the right, Indra is seen holding the umbrella over the babe (the Buddha), who is standing on a lotus.<sup>2</sup>

The scene, though representing vividly the various incidents connected with the birth of the Buddha, lacks the refinement of drawing and high degree of technical skill shown in the previous subject. The lack of aesthetic merit is apparently due to the artist's vision being dimmed by observance of religious conventionalities.

In the left part of the fresco, near the deity holding the pearl-string, there are three figures, two female and one male. The middle one represents Māyā, who is going to the city of Devadaha to see her relatives. The other female figure is Māyā's special attendant, and the male figure her personal servant. It may be noticed that his moustache is rather cleverly painted. The fresco next below these figures has perished, but the subject is continued below, and at the bottom of Plate XXIII a lady may be seen carried in a palanquin on men's shoulders. The drawing of the head of one of the palanquin-bearers is highly realistic, and expresses his tense feeling as the result of his heavy burden.

Near this palanquin-bearer there are several other figures, two of which, representing a male and a female, are noticeable on account of their excellent workmanship. The drawing of the lady's torso is particularly graceful.

To the right of this scene is another, which is reproduced in both Plates XXII and XXIII. It represents a hermit sitting on the steps in front of a door, and a lady offering him something on a tray. In front of the hermit are a number of figures with outstretched hands, apparently representing beggars. The outlines of these figures have not been finished, so some of them look very crude.

Near the end of this group, towards the right, are a prince and a princess. The former has amorously placed one hand on the breast of his consort, and with the other is offering her a cup of wine. The drawing of these two figures is quite refined. The whole of this scene is devoid of colour. Perhaps the drawing was begun later than the rest and never completed.<sup>3</sup>

## VOTARIES BRINGING OFFERINGS

### *Plate XXIV*

*The scene is painted on the left wall of the chapel to the left of the antechamber. As the colours are dull, the subject is reproduced in monochrome only.*

AT the great shrines of India assemble votaries of different walks and stations of life and of different ages, the variety of their moods, features, and dresses giving a kaleidoscopic effect. In this fresco the artist has painted a motley group of such characters, and his success

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Hardy's Manual of Buddhism*, pp. 134-6.

<sup>2</sup> The figure of the babe Buddha is not reproduced in the plate.

<sup>3</sup> To the right of the last subject, above the second cell-

door, the figures of four Buddhas are delineated. They are all draped in red robes, and two of them are in the teaching, and two in the meditative attitude. Below is a *Bhikshu* in the act of adoration. Above the four Buddhas an

in the display of a keen sense of humour may well be appreciated. The drawing, on the other hand, is somewhat poor, and the colours insipid.

The scene lies in a building containing several apartments, which are separated from each other by slender pillars. Commencing from the left apartment, we notice a dark figure standing near the pillar at the extreme end. The style of his dress is strange. The upper garment consists of a long coat, which is very loose, and although held together by a girdle, its middle part falls far below the waist line.<sup>1</sup> Below this garment he is wearing either a *dhōṭī*<sup>2</sup> or a pair of trousers which are visible on and below his knees. The feet are covered by striped stockings, and the queer part is that there are no shoes. His face also has a serio-comic expression, and the forefinger of the left hand is raised as if to stop people from laughing at him.

In this apartment the figures of the four dwarfs in the foreground also provoke laughter. They have long trunks, short legs, and very funny features. The dwarf at the extreme left end has contorted his features in looking up, and his circular eyes, dumpy nose, and round chin look most comic. His dress also adds to this impression. The scarf (*aṅgochhā*), which is too long for his size, is worn on the shoulders and round the arms in the typical Brāhman fashion.

The features of the two middle dwarfs are equally ludicrous, and the legs of the one who is carrying a tray are so short that they are almost lost in the extraordinary length of the trunk. The fourth dwarf, who is in front, carries a round vessel. It is hung from his shoulder by a string which he holds in his right hand. The swollen cheeks and Punch-like nose and chin of this figure also show a deep sense of humour.

Above the dwarfs are three ladies, the one at the extreme left end holding a tray of flowers, among which the lotus is prominent. The complexion of the lady is brick-red, perhaps showing her humble rank in life. The coiffure of this figure is, however, most elaborate, but people who are familiar with the habits and styles of different classes of women of the Deccan know that the coiffure of a *Dhed* (menial class) or a *Kunbi* (peasant) woman at the present time is as elaborate as that of a high-class Hindu lady. The arm and the breast of this figure are considerably exaggerated, and may appear inartistic to a European critic, but the delineation of the fingers and waist shows much tender feeling, and must be admired.

The complexion of the lady in the middle is dark, but the artist has given her most refined features, and the high lights placed on the forehead, nose, and chin indicate apparently the effulgence of youth or the nobility of her position.<sup>3</sup> A close study of the fresco shows that the effect of high lights has been produced by adding splashes of white paint on the general dark hue of the skin.

The complexion of the third lady of this group is pinkish-white, but the expression of her

inscription is painted (*vide* Appendix). Proceeding farther to the right, the wall between the second and third cell-doors is entirely covered with figures of the Buddhas, one hundred and ten altogether, arranged in eleven rows, ten figures in each row. The workmanship of these figures is very poor, and they have been drawn

in such large numbers simply to add sanctity to the site.

<sup>1</sup> The material of this garment has a star-pattern design.

<sup>2</sup> White cloth covering the loins.

<sup>3</sup> During the Buddhist period of Indian history there was no colour prejudice. See *Ajanta*, i. 48 (footnote 4).

face is rather sad. She is wearing a *choṭī* (bodice)<sup>1</sup> of dark material and holds a purse with long strings, or a flower with a long stalk, in her hand. The artist's love of variety and fondness for pretty detail may be judged from the different styles of the coiffures of these three ladies.

In the middle apartment are four female figures, and if an infant is also to be included, they become five. The child is held in the arms of the lady at the extreme right end, but it is almost on the point of falling from her arms in its excitement at the sight of the small duckling, either living or a toy, in the hand of the lady at the extreme left end of the apartment. The delineation of the infant is very vivacious, and the heads of these two ladies also are admirably drawn, though their arms, like those of the ladies in the left apartment, are somewhat spoilt by exaggeration.

Below these two ladies there is a third, who has raised the forefinger of her right hand, apparently to warn the child not to be so restless at the sight of things belonging to others. Below this figure is a girl, whose elaborate neck ornaments and large ear-rings are prominent. She is also looking at the lady holding the duckling. The nose of the girl is rather large, which defect has been accentuated by the artist placing a high light on it. The face is, however, full of expression, and exhibits the power of the artist in giving life to his creations.

The lady holding the bird has fastened her skirts (or the *sārī*) in such a manner that on one side a great deal of her beautiful waist is exposed, a good example of the caprice of the artist.

Proceeding towards the right, near a door, there are three figures, the most comic of which represents a *Bhikṣu* with a bald head. A fringe of hair is to be seen on the forehead and some growth on the back of the skull, but the crown is absolutely bald. It is interesting to note the twisted tail-like tuft just in the middle of the hair on the back of the *Bhikṣu*'s head. This tuft is still in fashion among the religious classes of Hindus. The *Bhikṣu* has placed a striped scarf across his breast and round his shoulders, which are otherwise bare. The figure is rather heavy, but the hands have been delicately drawn; this style of treatment, it appears, had become almost conventional. The gesture of the hand and the pose of the head suggest that he is saying something to the people in front.

Below him is a dwarf, apparently a girl, as shown by her coiffure. The features of this figure are somewhat obliterated, and the expression cannot be studied with certainty. Between the *Bhikṣu* and the right pillar of the middle apartment, and to the left of the door, is another female figure, whose hair falls dishevelled on her neck and shoulders. She has placed her arm on her breast, apparently to soothe her emotion, but the head being damaged, the expression cannot be gathered from her face. The delineation of the hand and fingers is beautiful.

Above the left apartment is a balcony in which six women may be seen. Two of these figures have become somewhat indistinct on account of the blackening of the fresco. Of the remaining four figures, the gesture of the lady at the extreme left end may suggest the *abhaya mudrā* (attitude of assurance). The next lady has made a loop with the fingers of her right hand, and this gesture may suggest the *dharmacakra* (teaching) attitude. The third lady, whose figure is rather dim, has exposed the palm of her right hand in the *dhyāna* (meditative)

<sup>1</sup> *Ajanta*, i. 17, footnote 1.



mood. The fourth, at the extreme right end of the balcony, has clasped the pillar with both hands, and is looking at the people below.

Farther to the right the artist has painted clouds in piles of dark green with silvery outlines. The delineation, in spite of its conventionality, is quite effective. Among these clouds the bust of a *Taksha* is seen, holding a sword in his right hand and a shield in his left. In front of him is a pair of flying figures. The female figure is gracefully held in the arm of her consort, and both are gently floating in the air. The male carries an upright sword in his right hand.

## VOTARIES BRINGING OFFERINGS

### *Plate XXV*

*This scene is painted on the right wall of the chapel to the left of the antechamber, and as the colours are rather dull it is reproduced in monochrome only.*

THE scene is similar to the previous one, only enacted in another part of the same building. The *dramatis personae* are, however, different, but painted in the same vein. Commencing from the left we see a figure whose long body and short legs at once provoke laughter. He is wearing a shirt and also a sash round his back and shoulders, but both fall short of covering his unshapely belly. The head of this figure is broken, so that the features and expression cannot be enjoyed, but they must have been very funny. Close to him, to the right, is a woman of dark green complexion<sup>1</sup> but with very refined features. She has exposed the palm of her right hand in a manner suggesting that she wants something. The pose and expression of this woman are extremely graceful. The rich coiffure and tight bodice add to the charm of the figure. Farther to the right is another woman of a fair complexion, who has raised her forefinger as if to warn the girl and boy who are by her side. The head and bust of this woman are partly damaged, but the portions which are intact show exquisite workmanship. For example, note the drawing of the right hand and the curve of the waist. The girl near her is looking sideways, and though her features are not very fine, and are disfigured by the obliteration of the eyes, the pose is quite good. She apparently holds flowers in her hand. Below the fair lady, in front of her legs, is a boy with a brick-red complexion, with a long trunk and short legs. He holds a tray of flowers. The figure of the boy has been much damaged, and his features and expression cannot be studied with certainty.

To the right of this group, in the middle apartment, are five figures, three representing ladies, one a girl, and another a boy. Commencing from the left, we notice a lady of clayey complexion, whose right arm is too long and slender for her body. Perhaps the artist had the idea of caricaturing her slimness. The elbow and hand of the green woman to her right are exquisitely drawn, and show that the artist was not incapable of delineating shapely limbs when he wanted to do so. To the right of the green woman is another of fair complexion, who has placed her right hand on the shoulder of the former. The left arm of this woman also has been caricatured.

The features of the boy in this group are particularly funny; his nose has a depression in

<sup>1</sup> For complexions, see *Ajanta*, i. 28 (footnote 4).

the middle and is turned up near the tip. The long pieces of wood in the holes of the lobes of his ears also provoke laughter. The trunk is much too long for the size of the legs, and the belly is prominent. To the right of the boy is a girl who has bent herself in a peculiar pose, suggestive of coyness. The features of the girl are beautiful, and the arms and legs are well drawn.

Proceeding to the right, there are four more figures, two of whom represent women, one a guard in uniform, and another a boy or a dwarf. The figure of the guard is at the extreme end, and his long, twisted moustache, embroidered coat and breeches, and long staff are interesting. The coat has tight sleeves, and reaches a little below the hips like a European coat. Near the guard on the left is a woman of brick-red complexion, whose *choli* has an apron-like prolongation in front. The sides of the waist and the back are exposed to view. The material of her bodice has black stars on a white ground. The expression of this lady is rather melancholy, an expression which is enhanced by the way in which she has doubled up her right arm and posed her fingers. Farther to the left, behind the pillar, there is another woman who is of a rather fair complexion.

The dwarf in this group has luxuriant black hair falling in curls on his back and shoulders. He is looking up in a sweet way at the people in front of him, and carrying offerings in a small bamboo basket<sup>1</sup> held in his left hand.

The building in this scene also has a balcony, in which four women are shown talking to one another. Their gestures are typical of the habits of the women of India. The features and ornaments of these women are, however, not very striking, but the sets of flat ivory bangles which are still in fashion among some of the primitive people, particularly the Lambādis, should be noticed.

In front of the balcony is a pair of *Gandharvas* flying in dark-green clouds with silver outlines.

The style of architecture suggests the sole use of wood as the building material; and the triangular part, with a knob in the left corner, is apparently a facet of the pyramidal roof of the left apartment of the building.

## DRAGONS, GEESE, AND OTHER DECORATIVE MOTIFS

### Plate XXVI

*The panel containing these devices is in the middle of the ceiling of the chapel to the left of the entrance. As the ceiling have become dark, the subject is reproduced in monochrome only.*

THE delineation of dragons has been a favourite theme with the artists of Ajanta, who have given them highly decorative forms. In the present panel, the artist has drawn four figures at the four corners, based on tigers' and crocodiles' heads, though the addition of tusks and horns have given them rather a mythical effect. The artist has given further play to his fancy, and the grotesqueness of these creatures has been accentuated by foliate

<sup>1</sup> Bamboo baskets of this design are still sold in the bazaars of Irān.

terminations of exquisite workmanship. The colours and drawings of two of these designs have faded to a great extent, but the remaining two are fairly intact, and in one we see a monster with a grinning face. The ornamentation of the teeth, eyebrows, and horns, show the artist's play of imagination, which is further demonstrated by the floriated scrolls. It will be interesting to note that the whole design is worked out on a dark background by white dots and lines. Red colour has been added afterwards only here and there to give warmth and vivacity to the subject.

The second design represents a dragon attacked by another mythological beast. The intricate design of the conventional foliage is in keeping with the wild grin of the two monsters.

The remaining part of the panel consists of concentric circles divided by bands containing jewellery patterns, foliage designs, and a procession of geese. The last represents twenty-three birds in a variety of characteristic movements, showing the artist's close study of the habits of geese. Some have their necks sharply curved as if they were in an angry mood, some have stretched them forward to show their determination to attack, some have bent them down low to preen their feathers in an attitude of languor, some have turned their heads gracefully to one side to look amorously at their mates, and some have turned them with a romantic curve upwards to show their feeling of ecstasy. The fine brush work of the artist in the delineation of the feathers of the birds also deserves close study.

The subject both as regards ingenuity of design and perfection of technique plainly shows the skill of the Ajanta artists in decorative art.<sup>1</sup>

## THE BUDDHA IN VARIOUS ATTITUDES

### *Plate XXVII*

*The subject is painted on the wall of the back corridor, between the ante-chamber and the left chapel, and as the fresco is much damaged, it is reproduced in monochrome only.*

THE principal figure in this fresco was a Buddha sitting on a throne and attended by two Bodhisattvas as *chaurī*-bearers. One of these wore a crown, and the other had his hair dressed in the style of the *jaṭā* of a Sādhu. All these figures have almost perished now; of the Buddha we see only the feet resting on a full-blown lotus, and of the two *chaurī*-bearers only portions of their heads. The throne of the Buddha is placed under a mango tree, the rich foliage and beautiful fruit of which have been delineated with great skill and taste. The background of the subject is filled up with the stalks and flowers of a lotus-creeper, the main stems of which spring from the flower on which the feet of the Buddha rest. The delineation of the stalks is exquisite, and exhibits very pretty decorative detail and fine brush work. The flowers springing from the stalks support the minor Buddhas, who are arranged in several rows

<sup>1</sup> On the back wall of the chapel, between the sculptures of two majestic *Yakṣas*, are the figures of two hermits shown in outline only. Farther to the right, near the *chaurī*-bearer, is the figure of a Buddha in the teaching attitude, with dark green and white clouds in the back-

ground. These figures, although unfinished, are interesting as showing the process of the artist in first marking out the outline, then strengthening it by washes to produce the effect of roundness, and afterwards adding colours.

around the principal figure. Seven of them are in the top row and six on either side, towards the right and left, arranged in three rows in pairs. These figures are in the teaching, assurance, and meditation attitudes.

Near the feet of the Buddha the figure of a votary is seen. He is kneeling, and holds a flower stalk in his right hand. The head of this figure is damaged, so the expression cannot be studied.

Near the bottom in the right-side corner is delineated the figure of another Buddha in the teaching attitude. He has an attendant holding a fly-whisk on either side of him, and below his throne an inscription is painted.<sup>1</sup>

The subject perhaps represents the vision of the Buddha in the Great Miracle of Śrāvastī: 'He appeared before the assembly seated in the attitude of meditation on a colossal lotus flower and made to spring from his body a multitude of Buddha figures in a variety of poses.'<sup>2</sup>

The delineation of the figures of the Buddha is somewhat poor in this subject, but on the other hand, the depiction of the foliage of the mango tree and of the stalks of the lotus-creeper shows much skill. The cause of this difference is apparently due to the fact that in the treatment of the figure of the Buddha himself, the artist had to observe certain conventions which marred the aesthetic effect of the reproduction.

## THE BODHISATTVA MAITREYA

### *Plate XXVIII a*

*The figure shown on this Plate is painted on the front wall of the shrine to the left of the door. As the colours are faint, the subject is reproduced in monochrome only.*

INSIDE the shrine, the figures of two Bodhisattvas are painted on the front wall, one on either side of the door. The figures are much damaged, and it is difficult to appreciate the skill of the artist properly, though the feet resting on full-blown lotus-flowers remain intact, and the drawing of the toes shows great care and a keen sense of beauty in execution. The soles are painted red, and on the big toes rings are seen, which were until quite recently worn as an ornament by men in India. The figure on the right probably represented the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara or Padmapāṇi, while on the left may be identified the Bodhisattva Maitreya (the Coming Buddha), for he holds a flask in his hand.

The figure to the right of the door, which is not reproduced in this plate, is attended by two *chaurī*-bearers, one of whom is attired like a prince and is wearing a crown, and the other is robed like a hermit, with his hair gathered in a tuft at the top of the head.

The figure to the left of the door, the Bodhisattva Maitreya, has no *chaurī*-bearers, but on either side of him are votaries adoring him, as shown by their hands raised in supplication. The figures of these votaries are mostly obliterated, but the one on the left is fairly distinct, and his crouching position cannot escape notice. On the right side of the fresco, near the feet of the Bodhisattva, is a design that perhaps represents conventional waves, and above

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix.

<sup>2</sup> See *Ajanta*, i, p. 35 (text and footnote 1).

that, a crescent-shaped object which may be a boat. Higher up may be seen a votary who has raised his hands in adoration.

Even when intact these figures would have conveyed little of the living imagination of the artist, as they are mainly symbolical, and therefore painted according to a strict convention.

## THE BUDDHA IN VARIOUS ATTITUDES

### *Plates XXVIII b-XXIX*

*The figures are painted on the right and left walls of the shrine. Those on the right wall being in a comparatively better state of preservation are reproduced in colour, while those on the left wall, being damaged, are shown in monochrome only.*

**I**N the delineation of a figure of the Great Being, strict observance of the religious law would have left little scope for the artist to display his imagination, though the figures painted in the shrine are not so sterile in artistic effect as those painted in the antechamber or in other parts of this *vihāra*.<sup>1</sup>

The drawing and colours of the figures on the left wall have faded considerably (Plate XXVIII *b*), but those on the right wall are fairly well preserved, and show the skill of the artist in the treatment of this obviously difficult subject.

Originally there were sixteen figures, arranged in rows of four on each wall. The teaching attitude has been selected, but the artist has taken the liberty of delineating the left hand in the meditation pose. For the sake of variety the soles of the feet are turned upwards in some cases, and turned sideways in others. The heads of some figures are also inclined with the same object. The general expression conveys calm, which, combined with the high lights of the face and the gestures of the fingers, gives a mystic effect.

The features are highly refined and the fingers exquisitely drawn, but the treatment of the lobes of the ear and the curls of the hair with the tuft (*ushnīsha*) on the crown is absolutely conventional.<sup>2</sup> The figures are draped with robes, but to conform to the religious tradition, the right arm and chest are exposed in some cases. The delineation of the seats in the form of lotus-flowers is again conventional,<sup>3</sup> but in the designs of the cloth of the cushions on which the Buddhas are leaning, the artist has shown his fancy, and we notice several pleasing patterns, apparently representing those in fashion at the time.

The imagination of the artist has also found free play in the delineation of the *chaurī*-

<sup>1</sup> On the walls of the antechamber one thousand figures of the Buddha are reproduced in a conventional style. They are crudely drawn, and possess no artistic merit. The figures are arranged in rows, and some of those which are painted on the front wall to the right of the door have inscriptions below them. The latter have been studied by Mr. J. Allan in the Appendix. There is an inscription also below the seat of the Buddha, painted on the base of the left column of the antechamber. *Vide* Appendix.

<sup>2</sup> According to Buddhist tradition, which was followed

by Indian artists, the hair of the Buddha should be short, the curls falling from left to right, and the top-knot (*ushnīsha*) should also be covered with short curls. For further information see A. Getty's *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*, pp. 198-9.

<sup>3</sup> The lotus (*padma*) was a symbol of self-creation among the Buddhists. Every Buddha or Bodhisattva, being self-existent, is supported by a lotus-flower to indicate his divine birth. *Ibid.*, p. 192.

bearers, a pair of whom, one male and another female, attends each Buddha. The male attendants are wearing crowns, while the female have rich coiffures, their hair being decorated with tiaras and other ornaments. The features and expressions of these figures show the skill of the artist in adding vivacity to an otherwise monotonous subject.

## CHERUBS, FLORAL DESIGNS, AND OTHER DECORATIVE MOTIFS

### *Plate XXX*

*The painting is on the ceiling of the shrine, and being well preserved, it is reproduced in colour.*

THE arrangement of the subject is the same as that of Plates X a and XXVI; that is, a series of concentric belts enclosed in a square panel with figures in the spandrels, but the exquisiteness of the designs and the luminousness of the colours place this painting among the best specimens of the decorative art of Ajanta. The figures in the corners represent four beautiful cherubs (*Ganas*) floating amid clouds and bringing offerings of flowers from heaven to the Buddha. The artist has shown extraordinary sensitiveness in depicting their movement, and the delineation of their hands and feet is marvellous. The drawing of their bodies is most refined, and the cherubs in their sweet plumpness resemble their analogues in the West during the Renaissance period. The colours are plain, red ochre, yellow ochre, *terra verde*, and lamp-black, but they have been used with such fine taste that the artistic effect is perfect.

The palms of the cherubs' hands have been painted red. The only covering which they have on their bodies is a short *dhoti* round their loins, the ends of which are flying in the air, adding to the beauty of the pattern. Two of them are wearing socks, which, contrasted with the scantiness of their dress, gives a comic effect. For the sake of variety the artist has painted each of them in a different pose, but it is frolicsome in each case and harmonizes well with the mirthful expressions of their faces.

Among the designs of the concentric belts, one represents a lotus-vine in which flowers of various types are shown. The skill of the artist in the representation of the flowers with all the beauty of their form, the delicacy of their petals and stalks, and the charm of their colours, is worthy of great admiration. As the design is so full of richness and colour, the artist has painted a band of simple devices in black and white, apparently to give rest to the eye. Among these motifs some may be symbolical, such as, for example, the four conches joined by a *svastika*-like mark, which represented the esoteric doctrine of the Buddha and was adopted by several sects. Another device represents a pair of posts or a gateway, which may also be symbolical.

In the darkness of the shrine the magnificent paintings of the ceiling add to the mystery and beauty of the Buddhist doctrine, and the skill of the artists in depicting the joyousness of their spirit, in spite of the apparent gloom and melancholy of their lives, cannot be too highly praised.

# THE BODHISATTVA (AVALOKITEŚVARA ?)

## Plate XXXI

*The subject is painted on the wall of the back corridor, between the antechamber and the right side-chapel. As the fresco is damaged, it is reproduced in monochrome only.*

THE colours of the fresco seem to have suffered much from the smoke and flames of the fires lit in later times by the unsympathetic occupants of the *vihāra*, and the gold-brown complexion of the principal figure, which apparently represented Avalokiteśvara, has become so dark that it is difficult to notice any tinge of brownness in it. Further, the clay layer on which the colours were laid has peeled off, leaving large gaps in the composition, but the few pieces which are intact bear ample testimony to the skill of the artist in drawing and to his fine feeling for decorative effect.

The head of the Bodhisattva is considerably damaged, but the fine features and the serenity of the expression can be seen. The beautiful crown with its delicate pearl strings shows the keen love of the artist for painting such subjects. Behind this figure, the dark background is relieved by stalks and foliage of exquisite design, some of which are sprouting from conventional rocks. Above the hills, to the left of the Bodhisattva, may be seen the figure of a lady who has raised her hands, in the act of adoration, towards the shrine. For beauty of conception and strength of technique, the graceful inclination of her body and the fine modelling of the limbs may compare favourably with the best specimens of Western art of the Renaissance period.

Near this figure was another, representing a *Bhikṣu*, whose dark-brown elbow and striped robe only may be seen now, the remaining part of the figure having perished.

On the left side of the fresco, near the bottom, we see the feet of three women, which are adorned with *karās* (anklets). The toes of these figures have been drawn with great sensitiveness and feeling for feminine beauty. In front of the Bodhisattva was the figure of a child, probably making an offering of flowers to him. His tiny feet and the lower border of the *dhotī* only can be seen now.

On the right side of the fresco, near the Bodhisattva, are four figures, all badly damaged. The best preserved is the torso of a lady, which shows excellent workmanship. Near her is a male figure, and below, a girl and a boy whose lower garments and feet may be seen.

Above the hills, in the right-hand corner, are a pair of flying figures amidst clouds, which as usual are painted conventionally. The upper parts of the bodies of these figures have perished.

This fresco, when intact, must have been one of the best specimens of the Ajanta School for grace of pose and vigour of technique.

## VOTARIES BRINGING OFFERINGS

### *Plates XXXII-XXXIII a*

*The subject is painted on the left wall of the chapel to the right of the antechamber, and it is reproduced both in colour and monochrome.*

THE fresco has excited much curiosity among European visitors to Ajanta, some of whom have compared the composition with the *Primavera* of Botticelli, while others have found in some of the figures a likeness to the early Madonnas of Europe. But the feeling, ideals, and technique shown in the fresco are so different from the European, that such comparisons, instead of helping towards a correct appreciation of the subject, are rather apt to have a contrary effect.

To describe the composition. We notice a group of five ladies in the middle. Their scanty dress, tight *cholīs* of a diaphanous material, and short *sārīs*, contrasted with their rich head-dresses and elaborate coiffures, give a most pleasing effect. The painter seems to have followed the actual styles, for such garments and such decoration of the hair are still in fashion among certain classes in the Deccan. The coiffure of the lady at the extreme left end is the most elaborate of all, and the tresses seem to be intertwined with strings of flowers, the whole falling in a rich mass on the shoulders and making a beautiful pattern. The figure of this lady is slim, and the fingers and toes are charmingly drawn, but the delineation of the arms and the legs is not pleasing, and there can be no comparison whatever between this figure and that of any of the nymphs of Botticelli in the *Primavera*.

Owing to the damaged condition of the fresco, the features and expression cannot be studied properly, but the doubling of the left arm of this lady and the gesture of her fingers show a serious mood, perhaps somewhat of amazement. She holds a basket(?) of offerings in her right hand. The basket has a greenish band round it, which may represent its side or bottom.

The painter has drawn the figures in this subject with a dark-pink outline and modelled them with shades of the same colour. No other tint has been added to show the complexion.

The next figure, to the right, is wearing a peculiar head-dress. It may be a striped scarf decorated with embroidery, tied round the head in the style of the women of Palestine. The ribbon-like scrolls seen on her shoulders may be only the ornamented borders of the scarf. Head-gear of this type is frequently to be seen in the sculptures of Ajanta as well as of Ellora, and it may either represent an independent local type, or may have been borrowed from Western Asia through the *Yavanas* who were present in the Deccan in considerable numbers during the early centuries of the Christian era.<sup>1</sup> This head-gear has, however, led some visitors to compare this figure, as well as the one to the right of it, with some of the Madonnas of Europe.

The head of this figure is partly injured, but the expression of the eyes shows a sweet innocence. The drawing of the arms and legs does not show a fine sense of proportion, the artist evidently having concerned himself more with detail than with general symmetry.

<sup>1</sup> See *Ajanta*, i, pp. 46 and 49.



She holds a small casket with a semicircular lid. The lid shows ornamentation which may represent chased metal-work. The curves of the waist are most graceful, and the delineation of the pearl strings is equally charming.

The limbs of the third lady, who is in the middle, show a better sense of proportion, though her left arm is rather exaggerated. Her pose shows great ease, and the position of the legs shows much more artistic skill than do those of the two ladies on either side of her. The head of this figure is unfortunately damaged, and the refinement of her features cannot be appreciated.

The fourth lady from the left side seems to be of a nervous temperament, for she has given a peculiar bend to her right leg, and has also twisted her left foot to one side. The left arm, which she has bent up, and the gesture of the fingers also give the same impression. She holds a small tray in her right hand. The delineation of the pearl jewellery shows fine brush-work. The head of this figure is also broken.

The fifth lady of the group, who is seen near the conventionalized rocks, is leading a boy with her right hand, while the forefinger of her left hand is raised in a significant way, perhaps to warn the other boy who is following her. Both these boys have sticks between their legs, as if they were pretending to ride. The delineation of the boy who is being led by the lady is very realistic. The head of the latter figure is damaged in parts, so the features, except for the eyes, cannot be studied. The eyes have a dreamy expression. The head-gear of the lady is very peculiar. It is a conical cap, either embroidered or decorated with flowers and jewels. The style in which she had tucked up her *sārī* is rather intriguing.

Below the group of ladies are four girls, evidently playing some game, as shown by the positions of their hands. The girl on the extreme left has raised her right hand as if giving directions regarding the laws of the game. The girl next to her, in compliance with the instructions, has taken up a special pose, having doubled up her legs and joined them together while sitting on the ground, and joined her hands together, interlocking the fingers. The third girl, in front of the latter, has assumed the same pose, except that her hands are apart. The fourth girl is seated cross-legged like the first, but her hands are apart from one another. The features of the third and fourth girl of the group are rather coarse, and the nose and lip of the fourth are of the 'Dravidian' type. The elaborate coiffures of all four confirm the surmise that they represent young girls of the Deccan of the period, who were not much different from the girls of the present day.

In the upper part of the fresco, above the blocks of conventional hills, is a pair of ascetics (*Arhats?*) on the left side, and two celestial beings (*Gandharvas*) on the right. Of the two ascetics, one has made a loop with her fingers, while the other has joined his hands as if in the act of adoration. The heads of the *Gandharvas* are broken, but the delineation of the lower parts of their bodies shows considerable movement.

Between these two pairs of heavenly bodies, in the middle of belts of rocks, is a rectangular opening, apparently suggestive of the door of a monastery (*vihāra*). The recesses of the side walls of the door have been admirably shown by a dark-bluish wash.

The most notable feature of this painting is, however, the excellent painting of the banana

tree to be seen on the left side of the fresco. The unfolding of a young shoot of leaf, and the curled edges of some which have been torn by a strong wind, are most accurately painted, and show not only close observation, but remarkable skill in execution. The drawing of the *asoka* tree on the right side of the fresco is equally faithful.

The colour-scheme of the subject also shows a refined taste. The dark green of the banana and *asoka* is artistically contrasted with the light pink and white of the belts of hills, while the human figures outlined in a red-ochre tint stand out well on a dark-brown foreground.

## VOTARIES BRINGING OFFERINGS TO THE BODHISATTVA (PADMAPĀṆI ?)

### *Plate XXXIII b*

*The subject is painted on the right wall of the chapel to the right of the antechamber, and as the colours are not very luminous, it is reproduced in monochrome only.*

THE scene seems to be a continuation of the previous one, for the setting of natural scenery in the background is the same, and we notice the advance part of the group of votaries approaching a Bodhisattva, who, on account of his holding a lotus-flower in his right hand, may be identified with Padmapāṇi. The Bodhisattva is squatting on a circular mat, the pose being rather unusual. One leg is bent with the knee upright, while the other is bent but resting on the ground. The head of the Bodhisattva is destroyed, so the features cannot be studied.

To the right of the Bodhisattva is a female attendant holding a *chaurī*. Her complexion is fair, and her features and pose are most graceful. She has a band or round cap on her head similar to those worn by two ladies in the previous subject (Plate XXXII). The painter has shown great feeling in the delineation of her right hand, which is holding the handle of the fly-whisk. The curve of the arm, the modelling of the elbow, and the drawing of the fingers are all most charming.

To the right of the *chaurī*-bearer is a male figure, whose bold step and gesture of the right hand suggest that he is requesting the two ladies behind him to come forward and lay the offerings before the Bodhisattva. He is armed with a bow, which may be seen on his left shoulder. One of these two ladies holds a tray of offerings. The features of the two ladies are partly obliterated, but the drawing where preserved is of the same type as that shown in the previous plate (Plate XXXII). The painter's love for elaborate coiffures is prominent in this subject as well.

Below the lady who holds the tray there is a female *chaurī*-bearer whose head has been damaged. The drawing of the torso shows much grace and beauty. Below the *chaurī*-bearer are figures of three children, one of whom is carrying a jack-fruit (*kathal*), another a small basket on his shoulder, and the third a lemon or an orange. The vivacity and movement of these figures are striking.

In front of the boys is a large circular tray with a conical cover of the type still in vogue in India.<sup>1</sup> On the other side of the tray, towards the left, are three more boys, two of whom are carrying cocks(?). The delineation of these boys is also most lively, and takes away much of the seriousness of the subject which has been otherwise effected by the religious mood of the votaries.

In the upper part of the fresco, above the blocks of conventional hills, a *Gandharva* and a pair of other celestial beings may be seen flying in clouds. They are bringing flowers on trays made of leaves for presentation to the Bodhisattva. The figure of the *Gandharva* is striking on account of its fine modelling and decorative detail.

## HĀRITĪ AND PĀÑCIKA(?): SCULPTURE

### Plate XXXIV

*These figures are carved on the back wall of the chapel to the left of the antechamber, and are reproduced in monochrome.*

AS the sculpture is somewhat conventional in character, it may not appeal to an artist, but the figures of the two female attendants in it who are holding the *chaurī* are quite graceful. The features of the principal figures, Hāritī and Pāñcika, would not have been so rough when covered with fine plaster, as they originally were. The sculptor has apparently been guided by tradition in giving them pot-bellies and hippopotamus-like limbs, for their cult was associated with abundance of food, wealth, and progeny.<sup>2</sup> Hāritī holds a purse in her right hand, and a child is seated on her left knee, the purse being symbolical of wealth, and the child of fecundity. It is interesting to note that in the Gandhāra sculpture the money purse is often held by her consort, Pāñcika, although in the Buddhist texts this *Yaksha* is never referred to as 'Bestower of Riches'.<sup>3</sup> In this sculpture Pāñcika holds a fruit, which, being broken, is difficult to identify. It may be a pomegranate, the symbol of fecundity,

<sup>1</sup> These conical covers are called *chhibhās* in the Deccan, and are generally of basket-work.

<sup>2</sup> Hāritī was originally an ogress, and once she wished to devour all the children in Rājagṛha. Her brother remonstrated with her in vain, and hoping to turn her from her evil design, united her with the *Yaksha* general Pāñcika. Hāritī had five hundred children as the result of this marriage, and of these the youngest was called Priyaṅkara. But in Rājagṛha there were bitter lamentations, for all the children of the town had disappeared, and a spirit told the bereaved parents that their children had been devoured by the *Yakshiṇī* Hāritī, and they must go to the Buddha and ask for his help. The people of Rājagṛha went to the Buddha, who was moved by their wailings, and on the following morning he proceeded towards the house of Hāritī, and lifting her youngest son Priyaṅkara, hid him under his begging bowl. Not finding the boy, Hāritī was

much agitated, and searched for him in all directions. Afterwards she was advised to wait on the Buddha and to put her faith in him. The *Yakshiṇī* in the beginning seems to have shown temper, but ultimately prostrated herself before him and pleaded respectfully: 'O Bhagavat, I beseech you to let me have my son Priyaṅkara.' The Buddha replied that she must first promise to follow his precepts and accord security to all the people of Rājagṛha, after which Priyaṅkara would be restored to her. She acceded to the command of the Buddha and forswore cannibalism. *Vide* Getty, *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*, pp. 84-5; Waddell, *Evolution of the Buddhist Cult*, p. 148; Hsüan-tsang, *Buddhist Records*, vol. i, pp. 110-11; and I-ching, *Record of the Buddhist Religion*, pp. 87-8.

<sup>3</sup> Foucher, *l'Art Gréco-Bouddhique*, vol. ii, p. 115, and Stein, *Report of the Archaeological Survey of India*, 1911-12, p. 8.

which is generally associated with Hārītī.<sup>1</sup> He has also an attendant, who holds a flower in her right hand and a bird (parrot?) in her left.<sup>2</sup> The bird and a lance are the distinguishing marks of Pāñcika in other places, but here he has no lance. Below, we see the children arranged in two groups. Each group is of five, thus figuratively representing the five hundred children of these two deities. Of the first group, three children are seen writing on tablets, while the remaining two are engaged in a boxing match, and the teacher, who is seated at the extreme right end in the sculpture, is flourishing a thick stick because of their misbehaviour.

The other group of children are occupied with a ram-fight. Three of them are urging a ram from one side and two provoking its rival from the other. The figures are roughly carved, but the dramatic effect is perceptible to a degree.

Above the principal figures, on the right side, we notice a scene in which the Buddha is attacked by Hārītī. The latter has four arms; in the two right hands she holds a club and a chopper, while in the two left she has a mace (? or a *vajra*) and a serpent. She is flourishing these weapons at the Buddha, who is not at all affected by her violence, but on the contrary is soothing her in a complacent mood, the attitude being that of assurance (*abhaya*).

On the left side, we notice Hārītī kneeling before the Buddha. She has a child in front of her, who is also adoring the Great Being. The two scenes represent the conversion of Hārītī by the Buddha. The child is Hārītī's youngest son, Priyañkara, who was given back to her after she had foresworn cannibalism.

The head-gear of Hārītī is interesting, containing a band of pearl strings with an aigrette-like ornament in the middle. To match the rich adornment of his consort, Pāñcika is wearing a richly bejewelled crown, and, below it, the luxuriant curls of his hair add to his princely magnificence.

The sculpture, when studied carefully, discloses many a beautiful detail, and it is not so devoid of artistic merits as it appears to be at first glance.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> According to tradition, the Buddha cured Hārītī of cannibalism by giving her a diet of pomegranate, the red fruit of which was supposed to resemble human flesh. *Vide* Getty, *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> This figure may be seen between Hārītī and Pāñcika.

<sup>3</sup> The ceiling of this chapel, like that of the chapel on the left, is most beautifully painted, and the figures of the dragons in the four corners of the central panel show much ingenuity and skill.

# VIDHURAPAṆḌITA JĀTAKA

## Plates XXXV-XLI

The story is painted in several episodes on the wall of the right corridor,<sup>1</sup> above and between the first and second cell doors. It is reproduced in six colour plates and one monochrome.

THE painter has selected the principal incidents of the *Jātaka*<sup>2</sup> according to his fancy, and delineated them with a grace of style and clearness of expression which are rather rare in the history of art until the fourteenth century of the Christian era. The sequence of events,

<sup>1</sup> On the pilaster between the back and right corridors is a painting which has been much damaged, and is therefore not reproduced in this volume. It has several figures, the most prominent being that of a lady who is almost nude down to her waist. The curves of the upper part of her body are extremely graceful. Of the other figures, one represents a male attendant who is armed with a baton having a round fluted design at the top. Another figure represents a female attendant (*dāsī*) who is bringing flowers to her mistress.

Proceeding farther to the right, on the wall of the right corridor, near the first cell door, was delineated the *Ruru Jātaka* (Cowell, iv. 161), which has almost perished now, and we see only a few pieces of the fresco sticking to the wall. In the lower part of the fresco a spotted deer is carrying an unconscious person on his back, the person's head dangling on one side. A little higher, the spotted deer is again noticed, and just at the top is a prince (the Bodhisattva) before whom a fair woman (Queen Khemā) is kneeling. The head of a dark woman can also be made out, but except for these few figures, everything is destroyed.

<sup>2</sup> The *Jātaka* (546) may be summarized thus: In Indraprastha, the capital of the Kuru kingdom, there once ruled a *rājā* named Dhanañjaya. He had a sagacious minister called Vidhurapaṇḍita, who fascinated all the kings of Jambudvīpa by his eloquence, and taught the Law with a Buddha's wisdom. Dhanañjaya, although famed for his skill in the game of dice, was a pious king, and gave alms and kept the moral law and observed the fast. In those days, there were three other kings who were equally pious, and the question arose as to who among them was most virtuous. They approached Vidhurapaṇḍita for the settlement of the problem, and stated their respective virtues in this manner: "The Nāga king preaches forbearance, the Suparṇa king gentleness, the king of the Gandharvas abstinence from carnal lust, and the king of the Kurus freedom from all hindrances to religious perfection." The minister on hearing that, observed that the four virtues mentioned by them were like the spokes of a wheel and that he alone, who was endowed with these four

virtues, was a perfect *ascetic*. This reply of Vidhurapaṇḍita satisfied all four kings, and each of them presented him with a precious gift; the gift of the Nāga king, Varuṇa, being a jewelled ornament off his own neck. When Varuṇa returned to the Nāga world, his queen Vimalā asked him where the jewel was, and he described to her the skill of Vidhurapaṇḍita in discoursing on the Law. The queen, on hearing the pre-eminence of the minister, grew eager to listen to his discourse, and feigning illness told her husband she would die if he would not secure her the heart of Vidhurapaṇḍita. Varuṇa had a most beautiful daughter, Irandatī, who noticing trouble on the countenance of her father, inquired from him the cause of it. The Nāga king told her the desire of her mother, and asked her to seek a husband who could bring Vidhurapaṇḍita's heart. She attired herself in the choicest manner, and spreading a couch of flowers she performed a dance, and sang a most sweet song. At that time the Yaksha general, Pūrṇaka, was riding in heaven on his magic horse, and when he heard the sweet song of Irandatī, he fell in love with her and promised to fetch her the heart of Vidhurapaṇḍita. Afterwards he took Irandatī to the Nāga king and asked for her as his wife. The Nāga king consulted his kinsmen and wife, and ultimately fixed the minister's heart as the necessary condition for the marriage. The gallant Yaksha readily agreed to that condition, and as he had heard of King Dhanañjaya's fondness for the game of dice, he thought he might be able to entice the king to play with him. As Pūrṇaka knew that the Kuru king would not play for a small wager, he secured a jewel worthy only of a universal king, and showing its magical qualities, persuaded Dhanañjaya to play with him. Dhanañjaya lost the game, and Pūrṇaka won from him Vidhurapaṇḍita as a wager. Afterwards Pūrṇaka flew with the minister on his magic horse, and on the way to the Nāga world made several attempts to kill Vidhurapaṇḍita in order to secure his heart. The Yaksha general failed in all his attempts. At last the minister himself pointed out how he could be killed, but when he discoursed on the duties of good men the Yaksha was highly pleased, and brought the minister alive to the Nāga world. Vidhura-

apparently through consideration of space, is not in strict conformity with that of the *Jātaka* version, so in describing the various scenes we shall follow the order observed in the fresco.

## I

Commencing as usual from the left side, we notice the court scene in which Pūrṇaka is showing the magnificent jewel<sup>1</sup> to King Dhanañjaya in order to induce him to play a game of dice (Plate XXXV). King Dhanañjaya is painted in a homely attitude, sitting on a low throne which is covered with a striped cloth of zigzag design. The drawing of the figure shows a firm outline, careful shading, and conspicuous high lights. The expression of the face has been somewhat dimmed owing to the partial obliteration of the features, but the gesture of his fingers—the thumb of his right hand placed on the second line of his middle finger—suggests that, barring his own person and the ‘white umbrella’ (emblem of sovereignty), he is prepared to stake everything to win the magical jewel.

To the right of the king is the figure of a lady, probably his wife, who holds a mirror or some round object in her right hand. The pose of the lady is graceful, and the drawing of the limbs shows a fine sense of proportion. The colour of her head has been partly bleached, and the features are obliterated; still, an expression of sadness is noticeable on her face.

Behind the king are two female *chaurī*-bearers, whose figures are rather blurred on account of the decay of the fresco. A little lower than these is the figure of a doorkeeper, which is in a comparatively better state of preservation. His long coat with tight sleeves (*aṅgrakhā*) is apparently his uniform dress, while the long staff which he holds is also a part of his outfit. The features of this figure also have become dim, but the short clipped hair of the head and the drooping moustache are visible.

In front of the door-keeper, below the throne of the king, are two more figures, one male and the other female. They are apparently the personal servants of the king. The male servant has made a loop with his fingers, perhaps to suggest that in gambling success is always doubtful. The female attendant has parted three of her fingers in a significant way as if to point out that a third thing, besides the two already reserved by the king, should be protected against the loss of the wager. The coiffure and pose of this figure are very elegant, the latter being the *anṛju* (the back view) of the *Vishṇudharmottara*.<sup>2</sup>

The two figures just in front of the king are those of his ministers. One of them seems to be of a care-free temperament, for he has raised two of his fingers simply to repeat the two objects which have been reserved by the king. His face also, although turned towards the king, does not show any anxious thought, and the high lights placed on his forehead, lips, and chin give a similar impression. The pose of the figure, three-quarter profile in a squatting attitude, is very graceful, and the delineation of the features is most vivacious. The lower part of the body, however, seems rather small when compared with the upper part.

paṇḍita fascinated Varuṇa and his consort Vimalā also by *Jātaka* (Cambridge ed.), vi. 126–56.

his wise discourse, and when he had stayed six days in the Nāga world, Varuṇa gave Irandaṭī to Pūrṇaka and permitted Vidhurapaṇḍita to return to the Kuru kingdom. <sup>1</sup> For the magical qualities of the jewel, see *ibid.*, vi. 135–6.

<sup>2</sup> Kramrisch, p. 13.

The minister painted above this figure holds his right hand in the attitude of meditation, to show that his mind is occupied with the vicissitudes of a game of chance. The pose of this figure is almost full-face, but the painter has delineated his features so skilfully that the result is most happy. The careless fashion in which the large strings of pearls are worn makes a beautiful contrast with the elaborate style in which his dark hair is coiled.

The figure of Pūrṇaka is at the extreme right end of the group. He is painted stooping down in an attitude of respect while showing the jewel to the king. One familiar with the etiquette of Oriental courts will find the pose most realistic. The delineation of the bust and right arm shows much delicate feeling and remarkable skill in drawing. The Sindh horse of Pūrṇaka is noticed behind him.<sup>1</sup> The body of the horse has been damaged, but the head is preserved, and is very well drawn.

To the right of this scene is another, evidently enacted in an adjoining room of the palace, the 'gaming hall' of the *Jātaka*. In the latter scene Dhanañjaya is shown engaged in a game of dice with the *Yaksha* general Pūrṇaka. The dice-board is prominent in the middle. It has twenty-four divisions, in two rows. Three dice are lying in front of the king, and as his hand is stretched towards them, it appears that he has just thrown the dice. The upper part of the fresco being broken, the heads of the two kings who watched the game<sup>2</sup> are broken, and the features of Dhanañjaya himself are so faint that it is difficult to get an impression of his inner feelings from them. The delineation of his toes, which are contorted, however, shows the agitation of his mind at the defeat.

Below the figure of Dhanañjaya, to the left of the dice-board, is the queen who is looking appealingly at Pūrṇaka. The drawing and colours of this figure have faded considerably, but what remains bears ample testimony to the fine conception of the artist.

Pūrṇaka, like the king, is seated on a cushion, and holds some object in his right hand. It may be the magic jewel or a flower. His gaze is fixed upon the king, and the expression shows that he is determined to win from his rival the best of what he had staked.

The complexions of the various characters of this story were originally of the same reddish-brown colour as that preserved in the lower parts of the fresco, but in the upper parts now they have different dark tints, in some cases being quite clayey. The change is due to the effect of smoke and fire.

## II

Below the last episode are two scenes, separated from each other by a balcony in which a rānī, evidently the wife of Dhanañjaya, is shown talking with a *dāsī* (Plates XXXV-XXXVII). The scene to the left (Plate XXXVI a) portrays Dhanañjaya discussing with his minister Vidhurapaṇḍita the question whether under the terms of the wager the latter could be treated as the property of the king. Vidhurapaṇḍita, being always truthful, has just observed that he was only a slave to the king, and in fulfilment of the wager might be given away to Pūrṇaka.

<sup>1</sup> For information regarding the magical powers of this horse see *Jātaka* (Cambridge ed.), vi. 131, 136-7.

<sup>2</sup> According to the *Jātaka*, one hundred kings watched

the contest between Dhanañjaya and Pūrṇaka. *Ibid.*, vi. 137.

The minister is painted in the middle with his head inclined to one side as if to show that he is indifferent to the displeasure of the king at his decision. The position of his right hand is, however, symbolical of the meditative mood, and the expression of his face also gives the same idea. In the fresco on the left side is the figure of Dhanañjaya, which has been somewhat damaged, and his expression of chagrin at the defeat cannot be made out. He is shown sitting on a striped cushion, and there is another behind his back. On the other side of Vidhurapaṇḍita is Pūrṇaka, declaring his second triumph, by bending his second finger, at the decision of the minister. The delineation of the fingers in the whole of this fresco is most artistic, and the great care which the painter has taken to suggest the meaning of the story by their gestures is very noticeable. The coiffure and the features of Pūrṇaka are also worthy of praise.

Behind the minister the heads of two women may be seen. The features are somewhat obliterated, but an expression of rapt attention can still be discerned from the fresco. In front of the minister are two more figures, one male and another female. Both of them have raised three fingers, to indicate perhaps that in addition to the person of the king and the royal umbrella the life of the minister was also protected under the terms of the wager. The drawing of these figures is exceptionally good, and the poses are also most artistic. The face of the lady, painted in profile, is full of expression.

The figure of a woman is also seen behind the cushion of the king, but the head is badly damaged. The delineation of the torso of this figure also shows a refined taste combined with excellent workmanship.

The other scene perhaps represents Vidhurapaṇḍita discoursing to the ladies of the palace before his departure with Pūrṇaka to the *Nāga* world (Plate XXXVI *b*). The figure of Vidhurapaṇḍita in this subject is indeed a masterpiece of Ajanta art. The beautiful round face with its refined features and mystic expression is surely worthy of a Great Being such as the artists of Ajanta painted in the light of the Buddhist canon. The delineation of the right hand shows a love for beauty of form and sweetness of effect such as is often met with in the school of Raphael, though it will be only confusing to look for similarity in the two schools in other respects. Vidhurapaṇḍita is holding a lotus flower, which is symbolical of his divine birth.

Behind Vidhurapaṇḍita are three ladies, all of whom are painted with exceptional grace and skill. The one near his right hand has a pathetic expression, which, contrasted with her youthful form, accentuates the mystic effect of the subject. The bangles on her wrists seem to be of ivory or of conch-shell. Such bangles are still in fashion among the primitive tribes of India. The other two ladies are also in a pensive mood, but their features, coiffures, and ornaments suggest the greatest care on the part of the artist for delicacy of finish.

On the right side of the painting, near the lady who is holding a flower, another female figure may be seen in profile. She appears to be carrying a bag on her back after the fashion of tradeswomen of India. But on a close examination of the fresco it appears that the painter originally wanted to delineate a figure with a curved back, but had to change his mind owing to lack of space, and the design now looking like a bag is only the outline of a curved body.



Whatever the object of the original design may have been, it now fits admirably with the figure of this lady, and gives the entire subject a realistic effect.

In front of Vidhurapaṇḍita is Pūrṇaka, who is squatting on the floor and looking eagerly at the former. He has made a loop (*dharmacakra*?) with his right hand, apparently to suggest that he is following the teaching of the sagacious minister. Near the pillar, at the left extremity of the scene, is a doorkeeper or guard, announcing that the retinue for the minister's departure is ready outside the palace. The doorkeeper as usual is clad in a long coat (*aṅgrakhā*) of blue cloth. The gesture of the fingers of his right hand is symbolical of the *dharmacakra* pose, while that of the fingers of the left hand, the forefinger being separated from the rest, perhaps indicates a forlorn hope regarding the return of his master from the kingdom of the *Nāgas*.

### III

According to the *Jātaka*, the *Yaksha* general, Pūrṇaka, carried Vidhura on his Sindhi horse; the minister immediately before his departure having observed, 'I have seized the tail of thy steed, proceed, O youth, as thou wilt.' The presence of the horse to the left of the last scene makes the story in the fresco tally with the *Jātaka* version; but lower down we see a royal procession in which Vidhurapaṇḍita is riding in state on an elephant. On his right is Pūrṇaka on his magical horse, and in front a large retinue of horsemen, infantry, and bandsmen. The latter scene may represent only an artist's diversion from the original story, or possibly a later version of Vidhurapaṇḍita's journey to the *Nāga* world, for the king Dhanāñjaya might not have been satisfied to send his esteemed minister alone, and might have sent a strong escort for the protection of his life against the impending outrage of the *Nāgas*.

The depiction of the scene (Plate XXXVII) is most vivacious, and the painter has displayed remarkable skill in the choice of poses, suggestion of movement, and expression of feelings. The figures of the two elephants fully convey their stately gait, such as is noticed in the march of these animals in royal processions, and the arched necks of the horses show that they are actually prancing. The trappings of these animals and the arms and accoutrements of the soldiers are all painted with extreme care, and they will be found of great value by those who are interested in the study of such things.

The white umbrella held over the head of Vidhurapaṇḍita is symbolical of his spiritual kingship. He had a *chaurī*-bearer as well, but only the hand of the latter is visible now behind the figure of Vidhurapaṇḍita, the body having been destroyed. The minister is urging the elephant on with the iron goad which is seen in his right hand. The thick ropes tied round the body of the animal and hanging on one side are meant to keep the trappings in position, and also to enable the *charkatā* (the elephant groom) to climb up the animal. The trappings of the horses are most elaborate, and except for the stirrups, which are not very clear, have all the accessories which are seen in a modern harness.<sup>1</sup> The light grey horse at the bottom of the picture is bedecked with ornaments as well, among which the *jhānjhan*, *haikal*, and *pākhar* are prominent.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the detail of the harness see *Ajanta*, i. 19 (foot-note 3).

<sup>2</sup> *Jhānjhan*, a tinkling anklet; *haikal*, an amulet,

or ornament worn round the neck; *pākhar*, iron arm for horse or elephant.

In the retinue five horses may be seen, of which one is bay, two dark grey, and two light grey. The dark greys are represented by a greenish colour, which is sometimes an accepted convention for grey.<sup>1</sup> Two of the horsemen are dressed in long coats with tight sleeves, which are evidently part of their uniform. Of the remaining riders, Pūrṇaka and another, riding on the bay horse, are nude to their waists in the royal fashion. Vidhurapaṇḍita, the divine prince, is also nude to the waist, and the hair of these three is bedecked with flowers or ribbons in an elaborate style.

The rider at the bottom of the picture has a sword in an embroidered scabbard hanging by his side. A groom carrying a bag of fodder on his back is seen behind this horseman, and another, who is also carrying a bag on his back, is in front of him.

Among the footmen, eleven soldiers are to be seen, all armed with short swords and shields. The former have an inward curve like the Gurkha *kukyī*. The shields are of two types, rectangular and circular. The circular shields have dragons' heads painted on them. The features of the soldiers are very characteristic, and the painter might have been representing the warlike tribes of his period (Plate XXXVIII).

The band is represented by two musicians only, one of whom is playing a flute, and the other beating a drum which hangs from his neck. The drum has leather straps round it for tightening the skins at each end.

## IV

The next scene (Plate XXXIX) lies in the *Nāga* world, and we see Vidhurapaṇḍita teaching the sacred doctrine to the *Nāga* king, Varuṇa. Behind Vidhurapaṇḍita is Pūrṇaka, and outside the pillared hall, in which they all are seated, is Pūrṇaka's Sindh horse, which has been painted twice, first as if descending from the air, and, secondly, resting on the earth.<sup>2</sup> The presence of the horse in these positions leads us to the conclusion that the royal escort given by King Dhanañjaya accompanied them only up to a certain limit, and that afterwards Pūrṇaka carried the minister on his horse.

Vidhurapaṇḍita is shown seated on a low stool, the seat of which is interlaced with tape like the modern *pīrlīs* of the Panjāb. The face of the paṇḍit is rather plump, but the features are refined, and the lustrous eyes with their contemplative gaze give a spiritual effect to his face. On the forehead the circular decorative mark (*tīkā*) is prominent. The limbs of the figure are well modelled and the drawing of the fingers is, as usual, exquisite, showing much delicacy and grace of form.

The figure of Pūrṇaka in this subject shows a broad muscular constitution, such as is befitting to a *Yaksha* general. The pose of the head is three-quarter profile, and the eyes, turned towards something above him, give an expression of expectation to his face. He is seated on a cushion, the check design on which will interest a student of old Indian textiles.

In front of Vidhurapaṇḍita is the *Nāga* king in an attitude of profound respect, both hands being joined and raised, and the upper part of the body bent a little forward. The halo of

<sup>1</sup> In Persian a grey horse is called *sabza*, lit. meaning 'green'.

<sup>2</sup> The horse can be seen better in the portion of this subject reproduced in the right-hand part of Plate XXXV.

five serpent-hoods is symbolical of his race,<sup>1</sup> and besides forming a pleasant design, adds to the effect of mystery.

Beside the *Nāga* king are two ladies, probably his wife Vimalā, and daughter, Irandatī, but they have no hood to signify their *Nāga* origin. The painter has drawn both these figures with great feeling and skill. Their faces are sweet, and as they look up at the face of the divine minister, their eyes seem to glisten with the light of hope. They have folded their arms and joined their hands in an attitude of extreme humility. In this pose the charm of the soft tapering fingers with beautiful nails, the lovely contours of the bust, and the exquisite curve of a thin waist have been shown to advantage. The painter's sense of colour must also be admired. The brown complexions of the two ladies almost glow with the flush of youth and beauty against a dark-green background.

The ear ornaments of these ladies are also worthy of notice. They have an elaborate pendant, like the modern *jhulaniā* or *jhumkā*, which is held on the ear by pearl or gold strings fastened with a jewelled clasp to the hair. The sets of bangles appear to be of ivory or of conch-shell, but some of them, as shown by their design, are of gold set with jewels.

Above the heads of these ladies is a niche in the wall with three compartments. In the middle compartment is a water vessel, which is interesting as showing that the articles of domestic use were rather plain in those days.

Behind the pillared hall, in which the last scene was enacted, we notice a balcony in which a queen is occupied in conversation with a lady of youthful appearance. This may be the private apartment of Vimalā, and she may here be discussing with Irandatī the prospect of her marriage with Pūrṇaka. We notice Pūrṇaka at the back of this chamber, probably awaiting the fulfilment of the promise made to him. He is riding on his Sindh horse.<sup>2</sup> The features of the two ladies are somewhat blurred now, but when newly painted were presumably very graceful. Irandatī has placed her forefinger in a characteristic way upon her chin, perhaps to indicate her feelings of modesty. Indian ladies even now are prone to place their forefingers on their chin in this fashion when blushing. Below, on the steps, is a girl who is perhaps stealthily listening to the conversation between the queen and the princess.

In the back wall of this apartment may be seen a door-frame with a red shutter, which may give an idea of the plain style of the houses of those days.

Below this balcony there is another in which a prince is seen talking to a princess. The prince holds a lotus-flower in his hand, which may lead to the conjecture that he is the Bodhisattva, in the form of the sagacious minister, Vidhurapaṇḍita. The lady, according to this conjecture, will be identified with Vimalā.

The steps, balustrades, and abutments of the balconies in this fresco give an excellent idea of the architecture of the time.

<sup>1</sup> For *Nāgas* see *Ajanta*, i. 11-12 (footnote 2).

the complete body of the horse with the rider is reproduced

<sup>2</sup> In this plate only the muzzle of the horse is seen, but in Plate XL.

## V

To the right of the scene shown in Plate XXXIX is pictured an assemblage of *Nāga* chiefs, Varuṇa's kinsmen, friends, and acquaintances,<sup>1</sup> whom he is consulting about the proposal of Pūrṇaka (Plate XI). The upper part of the fresco being badly damaged, the heads of two figures, including that of Varuṇa, are destroyed. The fine brushwork and colours of the latter figure are also much faded, and it is difficult to discuss the artistic merits of the portrait. The gesture of the right hand of Varuṇa, however, suggests that he is faced with a dilemma, and is telling Pūrṇaka to wait, 'for a business done without consultation leads afterwards to regret'. On the right-hand side of Varuṇa is Irandatī, and on the left, her mother Vimalā, the figures of both being drawn with great feeling. Irandatī is gracefully leaning on her father, to persuade him in a maiden-like manner to accede to the proposal of her lover. On account of the damaged condition of the painting, the eyes of Irandatī have been spoiled, but the charm of her other features and grace of her pose can still be admired.

In contrast to the short slim figure of Irandatī, Vimalā has a matronly appearance, though the painter has not failed to endow her also with beauty of form. The expression of her face is very sweet, and to show her intimacy and dependence, she has placed her elbow on the arm of her husband. Both Irandatī and Vimalā have a *Nāga* hood above their heads as an emblem of their race.

Near the right hand of Irandatī is a figure, rather blurred, with its head completely destroyed. Below this is another figure which is well preserved, and represents a young man. The pose and the expression of the face show determination and vivacity of temperament; and if the circular yellow patch behind the head does not represent a *Nāga* hood, the figure may be identified with that of Pūrṇaka.

A little lower down is the crouching figure of a young prince, who has turned himself on one side. He is looking up at the king and pointing out some solution of the dilemma, as indicated by the half-open loop of his fingers. To make the face of the youth prominent, the painter has placed a high light on it, but on account of the decay of the fresco, the artistic effect is entirely spoiled. The pose, although somewhat unfamiliar to the eye of a European, is quite realistic.

In front of the king are two *Nāga* chiefs, one of whom has a double hood over his head. The number of hoods apparently signifies the social or political rank, for King Varuṇa has been shown with five hoods. It may be interesting to note that the ladies in this fresco as well as in other places have invariably been painted with one hood only. The *Nāga* chief with the double hood in this group is seated on a cushion, while the one to his left who has a single hood is squatting on the ground, the difference being apparently due to consideration of rank. The poses of both these figures<sup>2</sup> show great ease and naturalness, while the drawing is most vigorous. The features of the figure whose head is shown in profile apparently represent an aboriginal of 'Dravidian' type. Both these figures have made loops with their fingers to indicate their doubt of the success of Pūrṇaka's mission in bringing Vidhurapaṇḍita's heart.

<sup>1</sup> *Jātaka*, ed., Cowell, vi. 132.

<sup>2</sup> The *aṅḡu* and *prsthāgata* of the *Pishyudharmottara*, Kramrisch, p. 13.

The quaintness of the features of these two figures has been admirably blended with an artistic colour scheme in which the dark olive of the complexions offers a beautiful contrast to the jet black of the hair or deep red of the background. The clear blues of the ribbons on their necks and of the loin-cloths add further charm to the composition.

To the right of these two chiefs, below the queen, are two more princes, the drawing of whose figures again shows great technical skill. Both of them are squatting, the bodies being painted in three-quarter profile.

In this subject the arrangement of the figures in a circle has given the painter an opportunity to delineate a variety of poses which are all most appropriate and artistic, and show the richness of his imagination and his complete mastery of technique.

## VI

Below the last scene, on the left side of the fresco, a princess is painted twice, first in a swing and afterwards leaning against a post of the swing and talking to a young man with a horse (Plate XLI *a*). The princess may be easily identified with Irandatī, who, according to the *Jātaka*, in search for a suitable husband, 'gathered all the flowers in the Himālaya which had colour, scent, or taste, and having adorned the entire mountain like a precious jewel, she spread a couch of flowers upon it, and, having executed a pleasant dance, she sang a sweet song'. The painter of Ajanta has substituted a swing for the couch, which is indeed an improvement, and adds to the artistic effect of the theme. The background is well adorned with flowers, and the ropes of the swing itself are decorated with flags, which flying in the air, give an excellent idea of movement. Movement is also suggested by the curves of the ropes and the pose of the lady, her legs being stretched fully, and her feet joined. One familiar with Indian literature will appreciate how much poetry and romance are associated with the swing, and even to-day the Indian girls put on dresses of all the bright colours of the rainbow, and sing love songs of the *barkhā rut* (rainy season) in a swing—

*Saiyān barkhā meṇ lene ko ā'e*, which means

'My lover has come to take me away during the rainy season'.<sup>1</sup>

The expression of Irandatī's face in talking to an unknown young man shows great restraint, but her inner joy is visible from the glow on her countenance, given by high lights. The face of the young man who, according to the *Jātaka*, is Pūrṇaka, is also beaming with a similar light, but the gesture of his fingers suggests that he is somewhat diffident in making the proposal. The heads of both figures show great imagination and skill, and the painter has admirably succeeded in depicting the subtle charm of the Buddhist canon by harmonizing the spiritual with the human feelings in this subject.

The story is continued on the right side of the fresco (Plate XLI *b*), where we see a palace scene in which the *Nāga* king, Varuṇa, is talking to his daughter and wife about the proposal of Pūrṇaka. The king has a son by his side, while in front of him there are two other ladies besides the queen and the princess royal. The pose of the *Nāga* king himself is not very

<sup>1</sup> After an oppressive summer, the rainy season is hailed with great joy in India.

artistic, and the drawing of his arms is rather poor, but the halo of *Nāga* hoods and the rich coiffure have given a picturesque effect to the figure. The pose of the young prince is on the contrary very interesting. He is leaning affectionately on his father, and to show his boyish concern at the situation of events, has placed his hand in a characteristic way under his chin.

Among the ladies, the princess Irandatī is addressing the *Nāga* king, and the delineation of her face and the gesture of her fingers, half looped, show that she is not very doubtful regarding the mission of Pūrṇaka in bringing the heart of Vidhurapaṇḍita. The lady immediately behind Irandatī seems to be a maid of honour. Her rapt attention indicates that she supports the view of the princess. On the right-hand side of the princess is the queen, who is pointing only one finger, evidently to suggest that the only condition to be imposed for the marriage of Irandatī should be the Vidhurapaṇḍita's heart. To quote the *Ītaka*: 'Our Irandatī is not to be won by wealth or treasure; if thou obtainest by thine own worth and bring here the sage's heart, the princess shall be won by that wealth. We ask no further treasure.' The head of this figure being partly damaged, the expression of her face cannot be studied. To the right of the queen is a maid, whose thick lips and broad nose show her to be of aboriginal stock. She is looking up at the king in a rather fierce way, apparently to suggest that the condition of winning the princess should be the hardest possible to be fulfilled.

The fingers of the queen and the princess have been drawn with remarkable skill in this subject. Their beautiful tapering form, with the tips painted red, suggest much delicacy and elegance.

## STORY OF A SEA VOYAGE: *PŪRṆA AVADĀNA*

### *Plate XLII*

*The subject is painted between the second and third cell doors of the right corridor, and is reproduced here in colour.*

THE fresco represents some scenes of the *Pūrṇa Avadāna*,<sup>1</sup> which are painted with great vividness. In the lower scene, commencing from the left, we see the Buddha blessing a votary who has knelt down before him in the act of adoration. The votary is apparently

<sup>1</sup> The main incidents of the *Pūrṇa Avadāna* are as follows: Pūrṇa, whose mother was a slave-girl, was the youngest and favourite son of a rich merchant of Śūrpāraka. After the father's death he and his eldest brother Bhavila were deprived of their property by the other two brothers, but by the judicious marketing of some sandal-wood Pūrṇa restored their fortune and became eventually the chief merchant of the country. He made six successful ocean voyages, and was then inclined to rest content; but some merchants from Śrāvastī persuaded him to embark a seventh time. On the way he heard them reciting verses in praise of the Buddha, and was filled with a desire to embrace the faith. When the voyage was over he obtained the permission of his brother Bhavila to abandon the worldly life, and received instruction from the Buddha at Śrāvastī. To show that he had now no care for the body he chose to live

in the land of the Śrōṇāparāntakas, a notoriously fierce and dangerous people, and converted many of them. Meanwhile Bhavila had gone to sea and arrived at a land where was a forest of *Gośirsha* sandal-wood; his men proceeded to cut down the trees, whereupon the owner, the *Yaksha* Maheśvara, raised a hurricane of the kind no ship can withstand. Bhavila was helpless, but his companions called to Pūrṇa for help. Pūrṇa, by his supernatural power, appeared on the ship, the storm ceased, and the *Yaksha* had to yield. Upon his return to Śūrpāraka Pūrṇa built a sandal-wood *vihāra*, and with the co-operation of his brothers and the king prepared a reception for the Buddha. The rest of the *Avadāna* relates the miracles associated with the Buddha's journey from Śrāvastī to Śūrpāraka. (From *Dīvyāvadāna*, ed. Cowell and Neil, Cambridge, 1886.)

Pūrṇa, and the scene may refer to his embracing the Buddhist faith. The heads of both figures are badly damaged, thus preventing a study of the expressions of the faces.

In front of the last scene is another in which a boat is attacked by fishes and sea-monsters in the midst of a stormy sea. The painter has shown in this scene the sea voyage of Bhavila, the elder brother of Pūrṇa, whose boat has been caught by a storm raised by the *Yaksha* Maheśvara. The surf and deep blue water have been rather conventionally shown by curved black and white lines which, however, are not displeasing to the eye. Among the fishes are the figures of two *Nāga* spirits who have either come to the rescue of the boat or, like the traditional mermaids, have appeared on the scene to beguile the crew by their beauty and charm. The former view seems to be more probable, for in the Buddhist literature the general inclination of the *Nāga* spirits is for the welfare of man, especially in connexion with their power over the element of water.<sup>1</sup> The painter has delineated these two figures with great imagination and skill. The lower parts of their bodies are coiled like that of a serpent, while the upper parts, which are human in form, have a graceful outline showing much feminine beauty. Their pose is also very striking, being suggestive of rapid movement. One of them has a halo of three serpents' hoods above her head, probably an emblem of sovereignty. We see another semi-human figure below the boat itself. The lower part of the body of this figure is apparently like that of a fish, but as the fresco is much damaged at this place, it is just possible that this figure may also represent a *Nāga* spirit, while the part representing a fish may be the body of another sea-animal. We notice a large variety of fishes in the sea, many of them are obviously mythical, but some are real.

The boat itself seems to be massively built, and the presence of twelve large pitchers of fresh water in its bow may indicate the strength of the crew, or suggest that the vessel is bound for a long voyage. A pair of oars is visible, each of which is attached to the side of the boat by a loop, the ends of the latter for security being passed through two rings fixed to the boat (Plate XLII).<sup>2</sup> Dragons' heads are carved both in the front and hind parts of the boat, and there is a lip-like projection at each end which adds to the picturesqueness of the design, and might have been useful for steering purposes as well, especially in shallow waters.

Near the oar, on the starboard side, there is a plank frame, which apparently marks the place whence the captain of the boat regulated the steering. There are three masts, apparently of timber, from which sails are hung. There is a post fixed to a frame in the stern of the boat as well, from which another sail (jib-sail?), fully blown by wind, may be seen.

On the boat we notice Bhavila looking up to heaven for succour, raising his hands in prayer. An angel (?) is painted as if coming down from heaven to the rescue of the boat.<sup>3</sup> The wings of the angel have a remarkable similarity to those shown on a fresco in Sir Aurel Stein's Collection of Central Asian Antiquities at Delhi. The latter fresco is of course much later

<sup>1</sup> Vide Vogel's *Indian Serpent-Lore* or Winternitz's 'Der Sarpabali, ein altindischer Schlangencult', *Mitteil. der anthropol. Gesellschaft in Wien*, vol. xviii (1888).

<sup>2</sup> The contrivance is called 'rowlock' in nautical terminology.

<sup>3</sup> Foucher has identified this figure with Maheśvara; but in the fresco this celestial being, descending from heaven towards Bhavila, whose hands are raised in prayer, seems to be rather a redresser than an aggressor. See *Four. Hyd. Arch. Soc.* 1919-20, p. 93.

than its prototype at Ajanta. A little higher up we see another flying figure. This is evidently Pūrṇa who, according to the *Avadāna*, appears on the scene by his supernatural powers. The figure of Pūrṇa has been damaged considerably.

Above the storm episode there is another scene in which Pūrṇa is shown bringing presents with a large procession to the Buddha. According to the *Avadāna*, Pūrṇa, on his return to Śūrpāraka, with the co-operation of his brothers and the king, arranged for a reception for the Buddha. The painter has separated the reception scene from the previous two by deep green blocks, which represent rocks conventionally. The reception scene shows a monastery in which we see votaries passing through a portico into a court which is overlooked by a music gallery and another apartment. The procession ultimately reaches the room where the Buddha is seated, delivering a sermon to the congregation. The various parts of the monastery shown in the fresco have a striking resemblance to the open court, music-gallery, and inner hall of many a temple in India.

To describe the figures. Commencing as usual from the left, we notice two ladies of exalted position in the portico. Their upper garments are scanty and transparent, so the painter has taken the opportunity to show their bodily charms by the delicate curves of his brush lines. Their poses and gestures are suggestive of the shyness of Indian women, and one of them has placed her hand on the shoulder of her companion who is looking back at her in a graceful manner. At the inner entrance of the portico, near the steps, another lady is carrying a tray of offerings on her left shoulder. The features and the expression of the face of this lady show much delicate feeling and feminine grace. In front of her, and on the steps, is a girl whose figure has been spoiled by the decay of the fresco.

In the court, near the steps, are painted four women, who by their features and styles of coiffures seem to be of a lower class, and may be identified with *dāsīs* (servant girls). One of them, carrying a large tray of presents, has very rough features, resembling those of the 'Dravidians' of South India. Her stooping pose is suggestive of the heavy weight of the presents.

In front of these four women is a male figure who, on account of his large size, may be identified with Pūrṇa.<sup>1</sup> The way in which he wears the large necklace round his arm and shoulders indicates the smartness of his nature, but as the head of this figure is damaged it is impossible to observe the expression of his feelings. Close to Pūrṇa, there is another votary. He is probably his elder brother, Bhavila, a little smaller in size, but has very refined features. Bhavila is looking at Pūrṇa, apparently for guidance as to what ceremonial should be observed when making the offering to the Great Being.

In front of Pūrṇa there are four more figures whose crouching poses and timid expressions suggest that they are servants and ready to carry out his instructions in the performance of the ceremony. The features of these figures are coarse, and the one wearing a blue *dhotī* (?)<sup>2</sup> has almost a 'Dravidian' appearance. Another of these servants holds a sword erect in his right hand and a shield in his left. The design of the latter is somewhat blurred on account of the decay of the fresco.

<sup>1</sup> The painters of Ajanta often distinguish the principal characters of a story by their comparatively larger size.

<sup>2</sup> This figure may be female. The fresco is badly damaged, so identification is difficult.



The courtyard of the monastery from which the procession of votaries is passing has a music gallery on one side. It is one stage higher than the courtyard, and has three openings towards it in the pillar and lintel style. The fresco is badly damaged at this place as well, but the figures of three musicians can be made out, one of whom is playing on cymbals and another on a pair of drums. To the right of the music-gallery is another apartment of the monastery, at the door of which two women are seen. One of them by her rich coiffure and elegant pose seems to be a lady of rank, while the other who is carrying a tray is apparently her *dāsī* (maid-servant).

Proceeding farther towards the right, we notice another apartment of the monastery, where the votaries have assembled before the Buddha, who is teaching the sacred doctrine to them. Among the votaries are seven men and two women, the position of the latter being a little lower and separate from that of the men. This distinction may be of interest as indicating the relative position held by women among Buddhists. The poses of all these figures are very realistic, reminiscent of the attitude of reverence and respect borne by the people of India even now when sitting before holy men. Behind the Buddha a *Bhikshu* may also be seen, but as the fresco has perished at that place, the lower part of the *Bhikshu*'s figure has entirely disappeared.

The arrangement of the several episodes of the story in this fresco reflects great ingenuity on the part of the artist, for each part looks separate from the other while all together form a connected tale. The delineation of some figures is also most artistic, particularly the figure of the lady at the inner entrance of the monastery, near the steps, whose pose and expression are indeed a vision of the Indian ideal of feminine beauty and elegance.

## PŪRṆA BRINGING OFFERINGS TO THE BUDDHA: *PŪRṆA AVADĀNA*

*Plates XLIII-XLIV a*

*The subject is painted above the third cell-door, but as the colours of the fresco have much faded, it is reproduced in monochrome only.*

THE story is continued from the last plate (XLII). We notice the Buddha coming to the sandal-wood *vihāra*, which Pūrṇa has built as a mark of his devotion to the Great Being. To describe the fresco in detail, beginning at the top left part, we first find the Buddha descending from heaven with the two *Arhats* (? or *Bhikshus*), who are shown flying behind him.<sup>1</sup> A little lower down, the Buddha appears standing on the ground with his two disciples, and receiving a group of votaries who have brought offerings to him. The figure of the Buddha is a little larger in size than those of the two disciples, but they are all draped alike in a long cloak or sheet, the right shoulder and arm being exposed in observance of religious convention. The colours of the fresco have been darkened by smoke, but the outline of the figures is intact and shows excellent drawing.

In front of the Buddha is Pūrṇa, whose features and pose are extremely graceful. He is presenting a metal *lotā*<sup>2</sup>, evidently filled with water as an emblem of worship to the Buddha.

<sup>1</sup> These figures are not reproduced in the Plate.

<sup>2</sup> A small, round, metal water-pot, still in use amongst the Hindus in India.

Behind Pūrṇa, there are three male figures, two of whom, carrying trays, have bent down in the characteristic Indian way to show their respect to the Great Being. Behind these male figures are painted four ladies whose poses and dress show great beauty and charm. The features of these figures have become somewhat dim, but the expression of veneration or of amazement can be judged from the gestures of their hands. The wavy trail of the *sārī* of a lady of this group shows artistic feeling.

In the background the painter has delineated a monastery, the sandal-wood *viḥāra* of the story, which has two stages. The doors of this building show very plain architecture, such as is noticed in Indian villages now. The rectangular design to the left of the lower door represents either the grill of a window or a painted dado.

Below the figures of the Buddha and his two disciples is painted a party of musicians (Plate XLIV *a*). Their figures are somewhat indistinct; still the musical instruments on which they are playing can be made out. One of them has a large drum hung from his neck by leather straps. The drum itself is covered with a network of cord either of cotton or leather. The figure to the left of the drummer is playing on a flute, and farther to the left is another playing on cymbals (*jhāṇjh*). Below the drummer is a trumpeter, and in front of him a conch-blower. The outline of these figures wherever intact shows great beauty and vigour. To the left of the musicians are two ladies painted in the act of adoration. Their features and poses are very striking, showing good taste and highly developed technique. Below these two ladies there was another figure of which the head and a part of the body only may be traced, the rest having perished.

## A PALACE SCENE: *NOT IDENTIFIED*

### *Plate XLIV b*

*The subject is painted on the right side of the third cell-door, and as the fresco is much damaged, it is reproduced in monochrome only.*

**I**N the upper part of the fresco is a *rājā* engaged in a religious conversation with his consort.<sup>1</sup> Both these figures are much damaged, but the portions which are intact show excellent workmanship. The expression on the *rājā*'s face shows restraint combined with nobility of character, while the attitude of the *rānī* indicates rapt attention to the discourse of her husband. Behind the *rānī* is a maid, whose coiffure and features are delineated with great delicacy of feeling. There is an attendant (*chaurī*-bearer?) behind the *rājā* as well, whose features are also refined.

Below this scene there is another in which the *rājā* and *rānī* are seen again; but the fresco is so badly damaged that the outlines and expressions of these figures cannot be scrutinized properly.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Foucher is inclined to identify this subject with the *Maghadēva Jātaka*. See *Jour. Hyd. Arch. Soc.* for 1919-20, p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> On the pilaster between the front and right corridors three figures are painted, the middle one of which perhaps

represented a Bodhisattva. Of this figure now only the lower part of the body is preserved. The other two figures represent a dwarf and a lady, the former bringing a tray of flowers as an offering to the Bodhisattva. The figure of the dwarf is very beautifully drawn.

## A PALACE SCENE: A LADY KNEELING AT THE FEET OF A RĀJĀ IN AN ANGRY MOOD: *NOT IDENTIFIED*

*Plates XLV-XLVI a*

*The scene is painted on the right wall of the front corridor above the cell-door. It is reproduced in colour.*

IN Cave II the artists of Ajanta have painted women in a variety of most graceful poses, which not only throw light on Indian modes and habits of the time, but show a close study of human character as well as a highly refined taste and a powerful technique. In this fresco, although the subject has not been identified, the painting tells its own story. We see a rājā sitting on a low throne in a pillared hall wherein are several ladies. The rājā is apparently in an angry mood, for he holds a naked sword in his right hand; but as the head of the figure is destroyed, the expression of his face cannot be studied. In front of the rājā is a lady kneeling at his feet, the drawing of whose figure is indeed a masterpiece of Indian art. The grace of a slim form with supple and pliant limbs has been shown to full advantage by her kneeling pose, while the delicate frills of the diaphanous costume and pearl jewellery add to the decorative effect. The effect of roundness has been beautifully produced by shading, and the fine brushwork can be noticed in the treatment of her hair, which falls in waves below the feet of the rājā. The head is unfortunately damaged, but the other limbs have been painted with so much feeling that the figure seems to be an embodiment of repentance.

A little above the kneeling lady, to the right of the rājā, is another female figure with a pinkish complexion. The head of this figure also is destroyed, but the pose is most realistic, the bend of the upper part of the body suggesting fright at the rājā's brandishing a naked sword. Both her hands are raised in the act of beseeching mercy. At the back of this woman there is another, near the pillar, apparently running from the hall in fright. The head and bust of this figure are destroyed.

Between the woman with the pinkish complexion and the rājā is another figure draped in a white cloak with full sleeves. The head of this figure also is missing, but the gesture of the hand suggests amazement at the situation. To the left of the rājā there are two more figures, both female. The pose of the woman at the extreme left end is interesting, as she is sitting on her haunches in such a way that the whole weight of the body is on her toes. The fresco is badly damaged at this place, and the upper part of the figure has almost disappeared. The features of the other figure also are obliterated, but her pose shows that she is struck with sorrow. The bending down of the head and the resting of the cheek on the back of the hand are gestures very characteristic of Indian women when they are in a pensive mood.

Below this scene is another in which the rājā is painted sitting on a royal throne with dragons' heads carved on its back. The head of the rājā is damaged in this scene as well, but the part which is intact shows that he is wearing a rich crown and that his features are very refined. Behind the rājā is a female attendant who is fanning him. The design of the fan is interesting, for fans of this type containing mat-work intertwined with coloured silk or cotton

cord are still made in India. The features of the maid are beautiful, but the expression is somewhat melancholy, evidently because of the angry mood of the rājā.

To the left of the rājā is the figure of a *Bhikshu* or of some religious person, draped in a pale-green robe. The drawing of the head of this figure is masterly, the wrinkles of the face and the soft elderly features making him very life-like. The gesture of his hand suggests that he is pointing out a certain course of action to the rājā to get rid of the dilemma with which he is faced.

Behind the religious person there is a maid who is leaning on the pillar in a graceful manner. Her features are beautiful, but the expression of her face and her pose suggest anxiety. Below this figure is a woman of dark complexion whose head and features are too much damaged to indicate her feelings.

To the right of the rājā, near the throne, is an elderly lady draped in a white costume with full sleeves. Her head is partly damaged, but the features which remain indicate sorrow. Behind the lady is the torso of a princess with a golden-brown complexion. A ring and chain are noticeable in her left hand, and lower down we see part of a chased metal vessel hung from the chain.

The whole story has been painted with remarkable skill, the feelings of pathos being apparent from the gesture and expression of each figure.

The lower part of this fresco being badly damaged, it is difficult to state whether the figures painted there represent a continuation of the above story or distinct subjects. In a panel, we notice a boy with a cock,<sup>1</sup> and lower down an elephant with a rider. The figure of the elephant has been drawn with great vigour and beauty, and shows the painter's delight in showing the majesty of the animal. In front of the elephant, traces of an attendant's figure can be made out, and nearby are two horses, one bay and the other grey, which have been painted red and green according to the usual convention.

## A BODHISATTVA IN THE TEACHING ATTITUDE

### *Plate XLVI b*

*The subject is painted on the right wall of the front gallery, to the right of the cell-door. It is reproduced in monochrome only.*

THIS painting seems never to have been finished, for several figures are shown in rough outline only. The subject represents a Bodhisattva sitting on a throne in the teaching attitude. His legs are crossed, and the feet rest on a rectangular stool. The figure is much damaged, but the outline of the body, the jewels and the crown, can be made out. Behind the Bodhisattva was a *chaurī*-bearer, whose figure has almost perished. Near the latter, on the right side, is a white figure which has made a loop with the right hand, and holds a tray of offerings on the left shoulder. The painter has shown this figure in the barest outline. A little farther to the right he has painted another *chaurī*-bearer, whose pose, on account of the curve

<sup>1</sup> Foucher has identified this subject with the 'Lesson of the Cock' (*Jātaka* No. 386?). See *Jour. Hyd. Arch. Soc.* for 1919-20, pp. 73-4.

near the waistline, is interesting. The spotted design of the cloth of the *cholī* and *sārī* of these women is also worthy of notice.

In front of the Bodhisattva are three figures squatting on the ground. The drawing of these figures is also very rough, but the position of their heads, which are raised towards the Bodhisattva, and the gesture of their hands suggest that they are listening with rapt attention to his sermon. Two of these figures who are wearing crowns have a pale complexion, while the third, who is sitting near the feet of the Bodhisattva, is of a reddish shade.

In the foreground near the foot-stool of the Bodhisattva is painted a lady whose pose suggests that she is stricken with sorrow. The drawing of this figure, particularly of the right arm, shows a fine conception and remarkable technical skill.

Below this scene are painted the figures of three elephants, the black and red tints of whose skins have been effectively shown. As the fresco is much damaged, the figures of the elephants have not been included in the Plate (XLVI *b*).<sup>1</sup>

## DECORATIVE DESIGNS

### *Plates XLVII and XLIX d*

*These designs are executed on the ceilings of the front and back corridors and the hall, and are reproduced both in colour and monochrome.*

THE ceiling of the interior of the cave, like the walls, has suffered much from the smoke and heat of the fire, and the result is that the colours and fine brushwork of the beautiful patterns and artistic figures which were painted on the ceiling have much faded, if they have not altogether perished. The variety of these designs is almost endless, representing not only floral patterns, geometrical devices, and jewellery *motifs*, but a large number of mythical beings, religious objects, and sportive scenes, which throw a flood of light on the rich imagination and technical skill of the painter on the one hand, while on the other they elucidate the religious and domestic life of the time. We have therefore ventured to get five of these designs copied by our artist, Mr. Sayed Ahmad, and as a guarantee of the fact that he has not over-emphasized the beauty of the original drawing of the frescoes by his own artistic imagination, we have reproduced two of the subjects by photographic process in monochrome (Plates XVII *b* and XLIX *d*), reproduction in colour being considered useless owing to the scorched condition of the frescoes.

One of these designs (Plate XLVII *a*) represents a pair of geese (?),<sup>2</sup> the natural beauty of whose forms have been enhanced, in the imagination of the painter, by the addition of ornamental wings and tails. The fancy of the artist is equally discernible in the choice of colours. He has illuminated the general dark brown of the birds' feathers by the silver-white of his fine

<sup>1</sup> Near this subject, on the front wall of the corridor, is another scene in which are seen a prince (a Bodhisattva?) with a lady and a male attendant. The lady has an elaborate coiffure, and is dressed in a *sārī* of striped design. The servant is wearing a red coat.

<sup>2</sup> Geese frequently occur in Buddhist religious stories, and there are three *Jātakas* (Nos. 502, 533, and 534) in which the Bodhisattva is said to have been born as a golden goose. Cf. *Jātaka*, ed. Cowell, iv. 266 ff. and v. 175 ff.

brushwork along the outline of the figure. A jet-black background adds further to the beauty of the colour scheme, while it also shows the design almost in relief.

The designs *b* and *c* represent a mermaid and a boar-headed man respectively, and have been painted with the same flourishes and colour effect as those shown in the pair of geese. The selection by the painter of these mythical and real animals for his composition was apparently due to their being frequently mentioned in the religious tales extant at the time, though they might have appealed to his imagination by reason of the grotesqueness of their forms as well.

The design *d* shows a conch-shell resting on a full-blown white lotus-flower. The lotus-flower (*padma*) being the symbol of self-creation has a religious significance among the Buddhists, but what its combination with the conch implies is a matter for conjecture. A lotus and a conch associated with Kuvera are considered to signify his inexhaustible treasures.<sup>1</sup> Have they the same significance in this device as well? The conch independently is an important symbol among the Hindus, and the combination might have acquired a religious significance at a time when a fusion of the Buddhist and Brahmanical beliefs was taking place.

The bracket-like device at the top of the conch-shell is rather puzzling, for it is too inelegant to be considered an artistic feature of the scheme.<sup>2</sup> The colours of this subject are lovely, the white flowers contrasting beautifully with the green leaves, and both of them almost glistening on a dark background. The red outline of the leaves and the flowers adds to the delicacy and perspective effect of the design.

The fifth design (*e*) represents a young hermit (*Arhat?*) flying in the air amid white clouds.<sup>3</sup> The features of this figure are very beautiful, and the legs, though rather conventionally bent, give an impression of movement. Movement is also indicated by the borders of the hermit's *dhotī* waving in the air. He is carrying flowers and a fruit like a mango, probably as an offering to the Buddha. The delineation of the clouds, though conventional, is pleasing to the eye.

## NĀGAS, GAṆAS, AND OTHER MYTHICAL BEINGS

### Plates XLVIII-XLIX

*These figures are painted on the pedestals of the back columns of the hall, and as the colours have much faded, the frescoes are reproduced in monochrome only.*

THE pedestals of the columns of the hall were originally painted, and the subjects represented *Nāgas*, *Gaṇas*, and other mythical beings included in the host of Buddhist gods by the Mahāyāna School. As some of these subjects have been painted with admirable skill, six of them are reproduced in these Plates (XLVIII *a-d* and XLIX *a-b*).

The subject XLVIII *a* represents a palace scene in which a *Nāga* king is shown with his consort and two female attendants, one of whom is a *chaurī*-bearer and the other a maid-of-honour, for she is sitting close to the king.<sup>4</sup> The latter holds a vessel like a wine cup in his right

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Coomaraswamy's *Yakṣas*, ii. 13. M. Goloubew, on account of these fanciful *motifs*, has suggested that the ceilings of some caves at Ajanta represent the Paradise of Kuvera.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* also Plate XLIX *d*.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* Plate XVII *b*.

<sup>4</sup> This episode is painted on the pedestal of the second back pillar of the hall counting from the left corner. The fresco faces the hall.

hand, but the serenity of his face and the gesture of his left hand show that he is talking on some serious subject to the *Nāgī*, who is listening with rapt attention to him. The pose and features of the *Nāgī* are very beautiful, and the expression of her face conveys a double kind of devotion, that of a wife as well as that of a disciple, for the king in those days was not only the domestic chief but also the religious lord. The expressions on the faces of the two attendants as well show feelings of calm and repose. It is interesting to note that even in a scene of *amor*, where the husband holds a cup of wine and the wife is lovingly reclining on his arm and knee, the religious element changes the general effect of the picture.

The next subject (Plate XLVIII *b*) represents a similar episode,<sup>1</sup> but the painter has altered the poses of the characters. The *Nāga* rājā is shown sitting in a characteristic Indian attitude; the right leg of the rājā is bent with the knee upwards, while the other leg is bent but rests on the ground. His head is painted in three-quarter profile, and the expression of inner peace is more pronounced than in the former fresco. He holds a cup of wine in his right hand, while his left, to express feelings of love and intimacy, is placed on the shoulder of his consort. The pose of the *Nāgī* is also slightly different from that of the previous fresco, while the attendant in this painting holds a round vessel (a wine jug?) instead of a fly-whisk.

The third subject (Plate XLVIII *c*) shows a fat figure (*Gaṇa*?) with a fair complexion and good features.<sup>2</sup> The palms of the hands being painted red convey an idea of foppishness, which is confirmed by the pose of the head, which is inclined on one side. The gesture of the fingers, on the other hand, introduce a religious element, and the general effect of the composition thus becomes serio-comic.

The painter's sense of humour is further illustrated by another figure (Plate XLVIII *d*) whose thin twisted moustache and pose of self-assertion are as ludicrous as the childish gesture of his right hand in protruding the middle finger.<sup>3</sup>

The fifth subject (XLIX *a*), like the first two, represents a *Nāga* king and queen with two maids, one of whom is clinging shyly to the bolster against which the rājā is leaning.<sup>4</sup> The other maid holds a vessel with a conical lid in her left hand. The vessel apparently contains dessert, for the *Nāga* rājā has a cup of wine in his right hand. The rājā has fondly placed his elbow on the shoulder of his consort, who is looking at him lovingly. The gesture of the hands of the rājā, however, suggests the teaching attitude, and a meditative air is apparent from the expression of his face, as also from the girdle round his back and knees, which is generally used by hermits when they sit in contemplation. The combination of wine-drinking with religious devotion might have been a feature of the *Nāga* cult at the time, and the painter's imagination having been struck with it, he has delineated the cult in several scenes (Plates XLVIII *a-b* and XLIX *a*).

To the right of the last subject, on another face of the pedestal of the third back column,

<sup>1</sup> This subject is painted to the right of the preceding one, on another face of the same pedestal.

<sup>2</sup> This figure is painted to the left of XLVIII *a* on the pedestal of the same pillar.

<sup>3</sup> This figure is painted on the pedestal of the same pillar, the fresco facing the ante-chamber.

<sup>4</sup> This subject is painted on the pedestal of the third back column counting from the left corner. The fresco faces the hall.

are painted two *Gaṇas*. The features of one of them convey a sweet innocence reminiscent of some of the early European delineations of cherubs (Plate XLIX *b*). The other figure has very coarse features, and its broad nose, bent upwards at the tip, and contracted eyebrows provoke laughter.

On the shafts of the two back columns of the hall, facing the antechamber, are carved figures of four-handed *Gaṇas* in dancing attitudes (Plate XLIX *c*). The sculptures are rather rough in workmanship, but the position of the hand, stretched in front of the breast of these figures, is interesting. The pose suggests the balancing of the body and rapidity of movement, features which are more pronounced at a later date in the sculptures and bronzes of Śiva in this pose.



Handwritten marks and symbols.

Handwritten marks and symbols.

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# APPENDIX

## A NOTE ON THE INSCRIPTIONS OF CAVE II

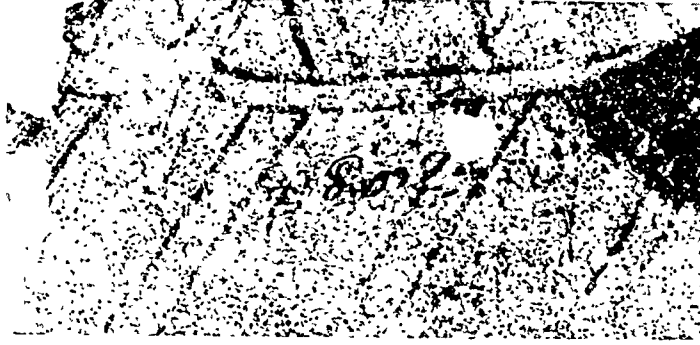
By JOHN ALLAN

THERE are a number of inscriptions written on the paintings in Cave II. Several are quite short: others have been of some length but are now in too fragmentary a condition to be restored. With the exception of no. 7, a comparatively modern Kanarese inscription, they are all in Sanskrit in Brāhmī characters and contemporary with the paintings. We have no similar written dated inscriptions elsewhere for comparison, but comparison with rock-cut inscriptions suggests that the date of these inscriptions is the first half of the sixth century. No. 11 may possibly be a trifle earlier, but it is improbable that any are later. These inscriptions have already been published from Paṇḍit Bhagvānlāl Indraji's readings by Dr. James Burgess in Memoir no. 10 of the Archaeological Survey of Western India: *Inscriptions from the Cave Temples of Western India*, 1881, pp. 80-2. Some portions of the inscriptions have decayed since he copied them, but they were already very incomplete in his time. They were discussed by Professor H. Lüders in the *Nachrichten von der Königl. Gesellsch. d. Wissenschaften* of Göttingen, Phil.-Hist. Klasse, 1902, pp. 758-62, in an article which Burgess translated for the *Indian Antiquary*, 1903, pp. 326-8.

Professor Lüders pointed out that the scenes represented are from the story of Kṣāntivādin, from the *Jātakamālā* of Ārya Śūra, also found in the Pāli *Jātaka* (ed. Fausböll, iii. 39-43; transl. Cowell, Francis, and Neil, iii. 23-9). The story is briefly as follows.

In a previous existence the Bodhisattva was a hermit in a forest, whose favourite subject of discourse had earned him the name of Kṣāntivādin, the 'preacher of patience'. One day the king with some of his queens visited the forest, where he lay down and fell asleep. His queens wandering about the forest came to the hermitage and were at once entertained to a discourse on forbearance which fascinated them. When the king awoke and found himself deserted for a hermit's discourse his anger knew no bounds. The women pleaded in vain and the hermit urged him to be calm, but he drew his sword and cut the hermit's limbs off one by one; the earth thereupon swallowed up the king while the dying hermit blessed him and assured the frightened people that they would not be similarly punished for their king's impiety.

1. The first inscription is a short one (Burgess, no. 3) painted on a cane stool on the back wall of a chapel to the left of the veranda.<sup>1</sup> It is under the seat to the right of the feet.



चान्तिवादिः Kṣāntivādiḥ = 'preaching patience.'

*Kṣāntivādi* (Pāli *khantivādi*) is synonymous with the more usual term *kṣāntivādin* = 'the preacher of patience', and the person represented was the hermit of the *Jātaka* discoursing to the king's wives, traces of one of whom can still be seen opposite the hermit.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Yazdani has described the frescoes of this chapel as follows: 'The walls of the chapel on the left side of the veranda are also painted, but much damage has been done to the frescoes by the percolation of water through a crack, which, however, we have now filled up. As only a few pieces of these frescoes now remain on the walls, it is difficult to identify the *Jātakas* (Nos. 8 and 28, *Jātaka-mālā*) in all their details, but the figures which can be traced will be described here. Starting from the back wall of the chapel, we notice above the door of the cell the outline of two heads with fine features. Proceeding towards the right, we see a hermit (the Bodhisattva Kṣāntivādi) sitting on a cane stool (*moṇḍhā*), the design of which is interesting, as stools of this type are still manufactured in India. An inscription (no. 1) is painted on the lower half of the stool. The feet and toes of the hermit have been drawn with great care, and the figure when complete would have been an excellent specimen of the work of the Ajanta School. In front of the figure of the hermit was painted a woman squatting on the ground, whose elbow, back, and lower part of the body can still be traced. The drawing of this figure also is vigorous. Higher up there was another woman of a dark complexion; only a part of her bust can be made out now. Below the seat of the hermit, on a dark green band which separates the scene above from the one painted below, is a long inscription (no. 2) in two lines.

Below the green band we again notice a hermit wearing a rosary of circular and elongated black beads. As the fresco is much damaged, the religious attitude (*mudrā*) cannot be studied. The hair of the hermit is scattered over

his shoulders. In front of the hermit were painted two more figures which have almost perished, and only portions of their heads can now be discerned. Below the feet of the hermit there is another inscription (no. 3) in two lines, relating to the subject which is painted farther down on the wall. The fresco is badly damaged here as well, and we can make out only three figures, one of a tawny-white complexion wearing a pair of necklaces, another, rather faint, to be traced by a portion of the torso, and the third, comparatively prominent on account of the gesture of the fingers, showing amazement.

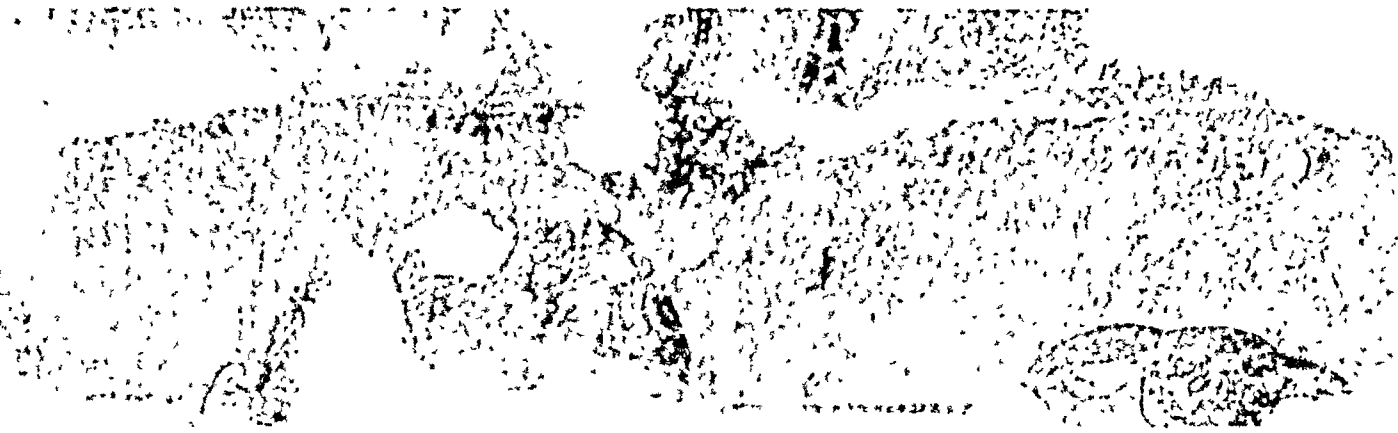
The frescoes of the right wall of the chapel are even more damaged than those on the back wall. Beginning with the left side of the wall, we observe the branches of a tree, the leaves of which are beautifully painted. Lower down was delineated a herd of cows, of which three are still visible. One is red, another pinkish-white, and the third rather greenish in colour. The pinkish-white cow has an inscription (no. 4) painted on its back. The designs of the chains round the necks of the cows are interesting.

Proceeding towards the right side, near the ceiling we notice a group of votaries bringing offerings. In this group five figures can be made out, two of them being female and two male. The *sāris* or *dhotīs* worn by these figures are tucked up to the waist so that the frilled ends hang down in an artistic fashion. A female figure holds a flower, the petals of which are like those of a rose or marigold. Below this scene an inscription (no. 5) is painted on a band.

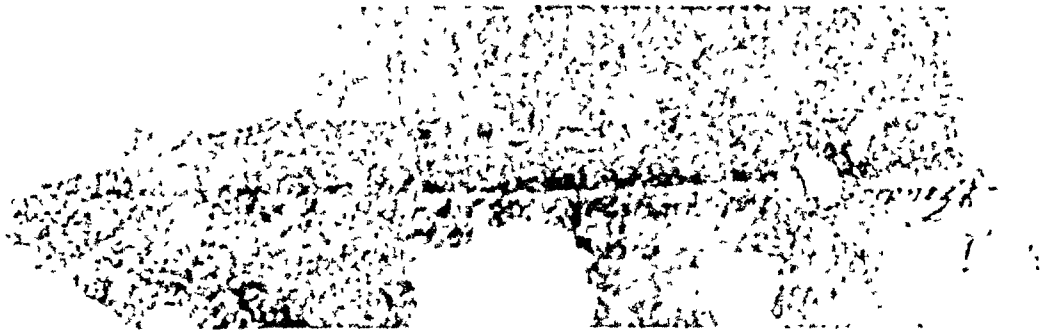
Farther down, there is another inscription (no. 6) painted on the seat occupied by a hermit or prince (Bodhisattva?), to whom several persons are making offerings.

## INSCRIPTIONS OF CAVE II

2. On a long band below the cane seat is a long inscription (Burgess, no. 4) in two lines, now much mutilated and completely broken in two: the upper line seems to have been longer than the lower. The text is now quite incoherent. The portion on the left (a) just above the two human heads is



while the remainder (b) on the right is



line 1 (a) - - - - यत्र गन्तुं म - - - - प - - - - तिम चाप - - -  
 (b) - - - - अभिष्ट्रिये स्वयम्भुवत् करोति यः शुभं - - - - हंसम दंभ्यते ।  
 line 2 (b) before first gap - मि मन्त्रमति मरोह - - - -  
 at end - - सारिण - -

Pandit Bhagvānlāl Indrajī was able to read much more; his lithographed copy of the inscription may be trans-literated as follows, dashes being used to indicate missing *akṣaras*:

Line 1 (a) - - - - yatrava rānta sadgu - bhucanā tan ma - - - - nājña na - - - - agahi - ntim  
 avāpya mānuṣa - - - -

(b) pātu - - - stachendriyai avakyaṃrtyu nnaṃ karoti yah śubhaṃ - - - - chā - kyaham ema daṃnyate.

Line 2 (a) - - - yanta kusumair mahitahā - - dāguse - - - ntin(ā) ghanā sarāsi mantabhramatessaroru  
 - - - rvicāva - - - kṣā hīna.

The figure of the hermit is almost destroyed, but his legs can be made out. One of them is curved on the seat, and the other rests on the ground. Among the votaries, one of a reddish complexion is presenting something to the hermit

and looking with reverence at him. Another, a lady of a pinkish complexion, is presenting a tray of offerings to him. At the back of these two is a third figure, dressed in a white loin cloth.

## APPENDIX

Lüders was able to identify this as three *ślokas* taken with a few copyist's errors from the *Kṣāntijātaka* in Ārya Śūra's *Īatakamālā*, no. XXVIII, pp. 181-92 in Kern's edition (Harvard Oriental Series, Vol. I), nos. 4, 15, and 19. The first of these is a description of the hermitage of Kṣāntivādin.

Nīvasanti hi yatraiva santaḥ sadguṇabhūṣaṇāḥ

Tan maṅgalyaṁ manojñaṁ ca tat tīrthaṁ tat tapovanam

which has been translated by J. S. Speyer (*The Īatakamālā*, Oxford, 1895, p. 254), as follows:

'For where pious persons, adorned with excellent virtues, have their residence, such a place is a very auspicious and lovely one, a sacred place of pilgrimage (a tīrtha), a hermitage.'

The accurate text of the remainder (= *ślokas* 15 and 19 in Kern's edition) is:

agarhitāṁ jātīm avāpya mānuṣīm anūnabhāvaṁ paṭubhis tathendriyaiḥ

avaśyamṛtyur na karoti yaḥ śubhaṁ pramāḍabhāk pratyaham eṣa vañcyate (15)

alambakriyante kusumair mahīruhāś taḍidguṇaiś toyavilambino ghanāḥ

sarāṁsi mattabhramaraiḥ saroruhair guṇair viśeṣādhigataiś tu dehinaḥ (19)

These are two verses from the hermit's discourse to the king's wives:

'He who, having obtained the blameless human state, and being born in the full possession of organs and senses sound and vigorous, without any defect, neglects to do good actions every day from lack of attention—such a one is much deceived: is he not subject to the necessity of death? (15)

'Blossoms are the ornaments of trees, it is flashes of lightning that adorn the big rain-clouds, the lakes are adorned by lotuses and waterlilies with their intoxicated bees: but virtues brought to perfection are the proper ornaments of living beings.' (19)

3. Equally fragmentary is the inscription below the figure wearing a rosary, who is again the hermit. Opposite him is a male figure, the king, and between them is a female figure, one of his wives, with her hands joined in an attitude of supplication, appealing to him to be merciful. The upper line is illegible except for fragments of letters and the lower ends:



-- व -- चतस -- ममस --  
----- तां न -- व दाटिमाध --

The Paṇḍit (Burgess, no. 4) was able to see a number of other *akṣaras*, but not sufficient to make the inscription intelligible to him. His transcription may be transliterated

natracchedity akṣataḥśāntīciraṁ chitta tasya prakṣa - - - - -  
 - - - - - prītiśāmyāna mahatāṁ nasa - - nātra nādevādhā - -

which Lüders has identified as *śloka* 56 of the *Kṣāntijātaka*, the correct text (Kern, p. 190) of which is:

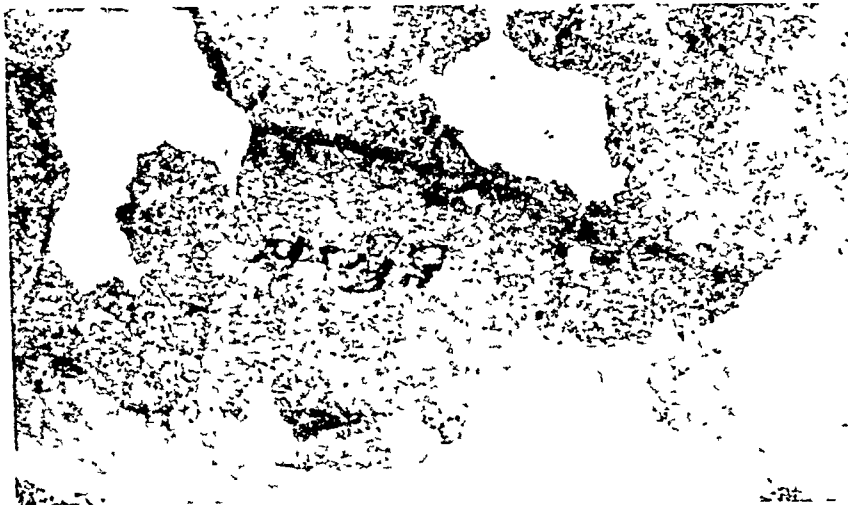
gātracchede 'py akṣataḥśāntīdhīraṁ cittaṁ tasya prekṣamāṇasya sādhoḥ  
 nāsīd duḥkhaṁ prītiyogān nṛpaṁ tu bhraṣṭaṁ dharmād vikṣya saṁtāpam āpa

The picture therefore represented the hermit being hewn limb from limb by the irate king in spite of the appeals of one of his wives to him to be merciful.

The *śloka* describes how the hermit never lost his composure. It may be thus translated, following Speyer (p. 266):

'In consequence of its habitual kindliness the mind of that virtuous one was inaccessible to the sense of sorrow on his own account. Even while he saw his limbs being cut off, his forbearance remained unshaken, but [the fact] that he saw the king had fallen from righteousness made him sore with grief.'

4. On the back of a cow painted on the right wall of the chapel is



सरसुति Sarasuti=a Prākṛit form of Sarasvatī (Burgess, no. 6).

## APPENDIX

5. On the same wall are traces of another inscription, now illegible, which may be read from the Paṇḍit's transcription (Burgess, no. 8) as



नान प्रसेहे मनस्वस्यात्रैव दुःखादि-हि-

----- nā

na prasehe manasvasyātraiva duḥkhādi - hi -

which Lüders has identified as an inaccurate copy of *śloka* 44 of Ārya Śūra's *Maitrībala Jātaka*; in Kern's edition, p. 48

hriyamāṇāvakāśam tu dānaprītyā punaḥ punaḥ

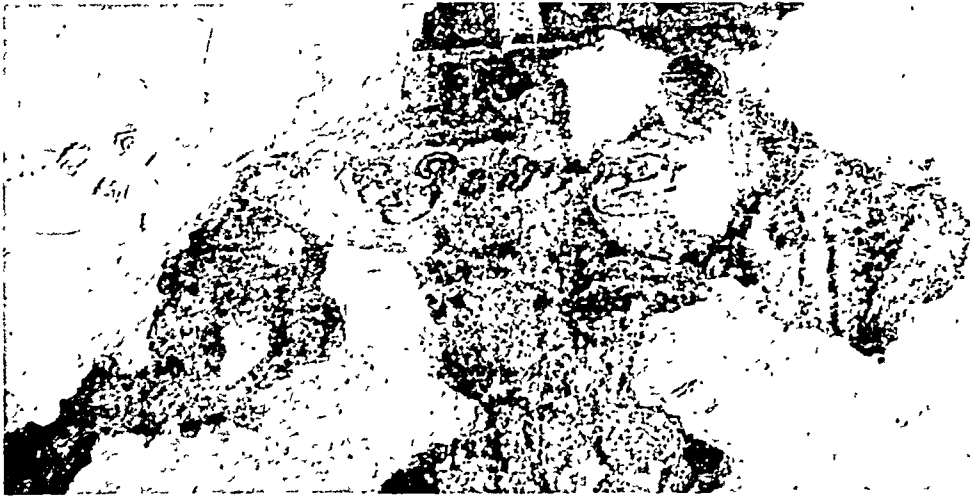
na prasehe manas tasya cchedaduḥkham vigāhitum

which may be translated, following Speyer (p. 66):

'And the joy which he experienced from giving left no space for the feeling of pain caused by cutting and continually prevented his mind from being plunged into grief.'

The scene evidently represented the kind-hearted Maitrībala giving his blood from five veins in his body to the Yakṣas who said they could only eat 'raw human flesh freshly cut off and still warm, and human blood'.

6. On the same wall the seated figure is named

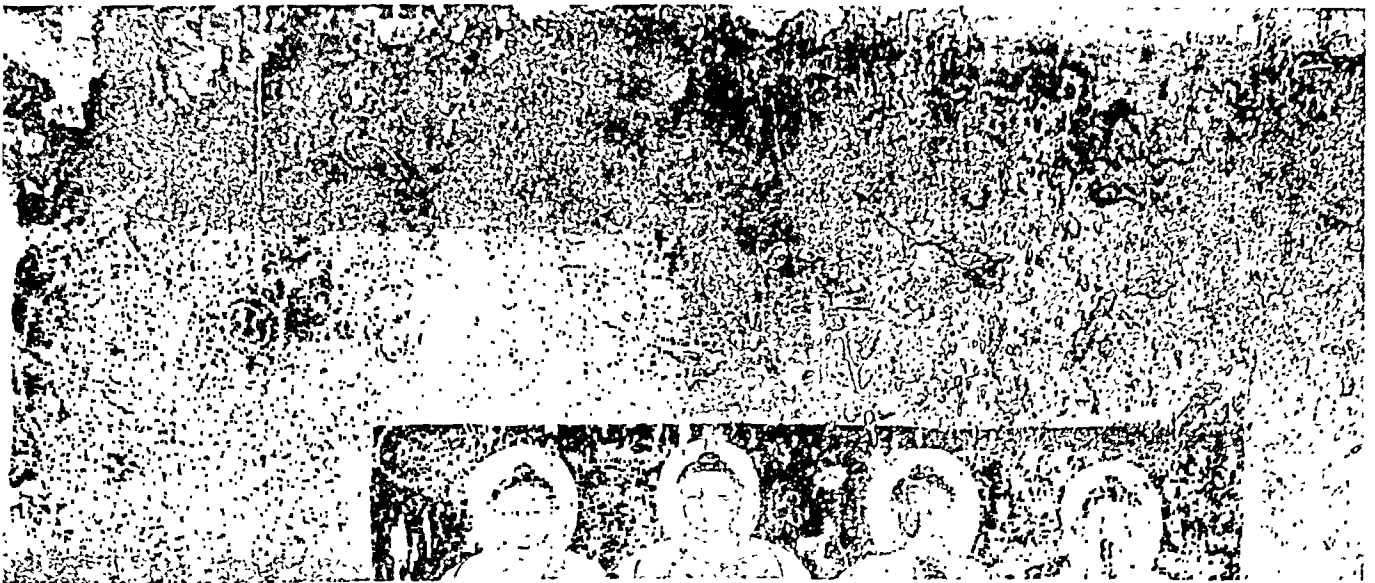


चैत्रिवलोरकराजा = Chaitribalorkarājā

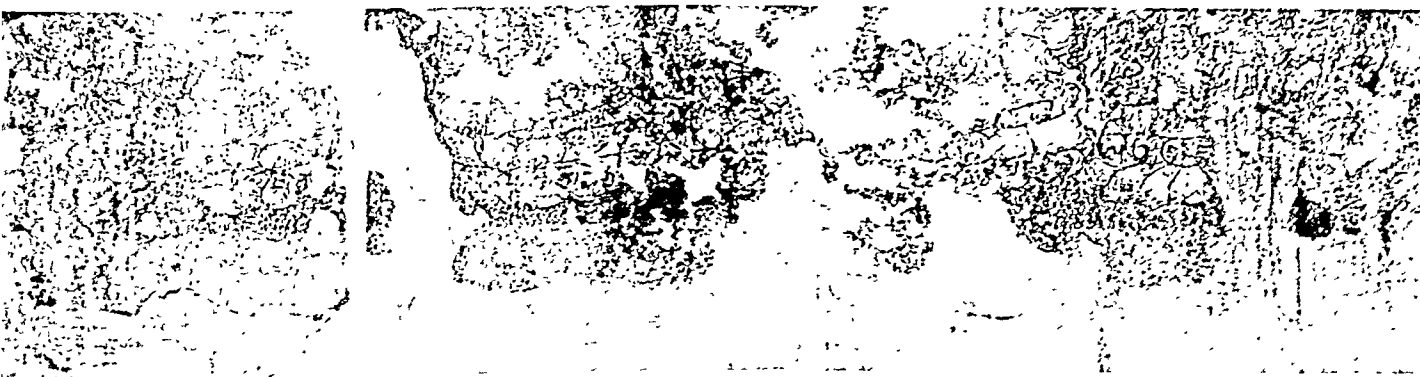
which, as Lüders points out, is an error for 'Maitrībalarājā', 'King Maitrībala' the hero of the *Jātaka*. The intrusion of the *akṣara rka* is the writer's error, and he clearly writes *Chai* for

*Mai* in the initial syllable. There is no reason to doubt that the scene represented was the testing of the kindheartedness of Maitrībala. The story is not found in the Pāli *Jātaka*.

7. Above the middle chapel door in the left corridor of the interior of Cave II, painted above the four Buddhas, is an inscription in Kanarese of quite recent date, apparently the work of some modern visitor. I have been unable to find any one who can read it intelligibly.



8. Traces of a long inscription are still visible on the lotus thrones of the Buddhas on the back wall of the left corridor in the interior of Cave II, but it is impossible to make anything coherent from them.





## APPENDIX

9. Painted on the lotus-throne of a Buddha on the back wall to the left of the ante-chamber may still be seen traces of letters which seem to show that the Paṇḍit (Burgess, no. 1) was right in reading the inscription, somewhat more legible in his time, as



देय[धम्मोयं शाक्यभिक्षो]र्भदन्त [बुध]गुप्तस्या - - - यदत्र पु[ण्य]  
----- वसत्त -----

Portions in brackets are now no longer legible. The fragment may be translated :

‘This meritorious gift of the Śākya *bhikṣu* (i.e. the Buddhist monk) the reverend Budha-gupta, whatever merit . . . of all beings.’

10. Painted on the lotus-throne of the Buddha on the pedestal of the left pillar of the ante-chamber has been a long inscription in at least two lines, of which traces of only a few characters remain.



11. On the back wall of the ante-chamber to the right of the shrine door are painted many figures of the Buddha; along the top is written a long inscription, now very incomplete, apparently recording the donation of the painted figures (Burgess, no. 2).

[दे]यधम्मोयं साक्य उपकस्य र - - - [ता] - - पितृम्म - - च अनु [-] र - -  
----- बुधा सह स -----

‘The meritorious gift of the Śākya devotee R - - - -’ (*uṣakasya* for *u[pā]sakasya*).

Traces of further lines of inscriptions, probably one at each row of heads, are still visible, but it is impossible to make anything coherent from them.



100

100

100

100

100

100



(1) THE BODHISATTVA KṢĀNTIVĀDI  
Inscriptions 1-3





(2) A HERD OF COWS  
Inscription no. 4

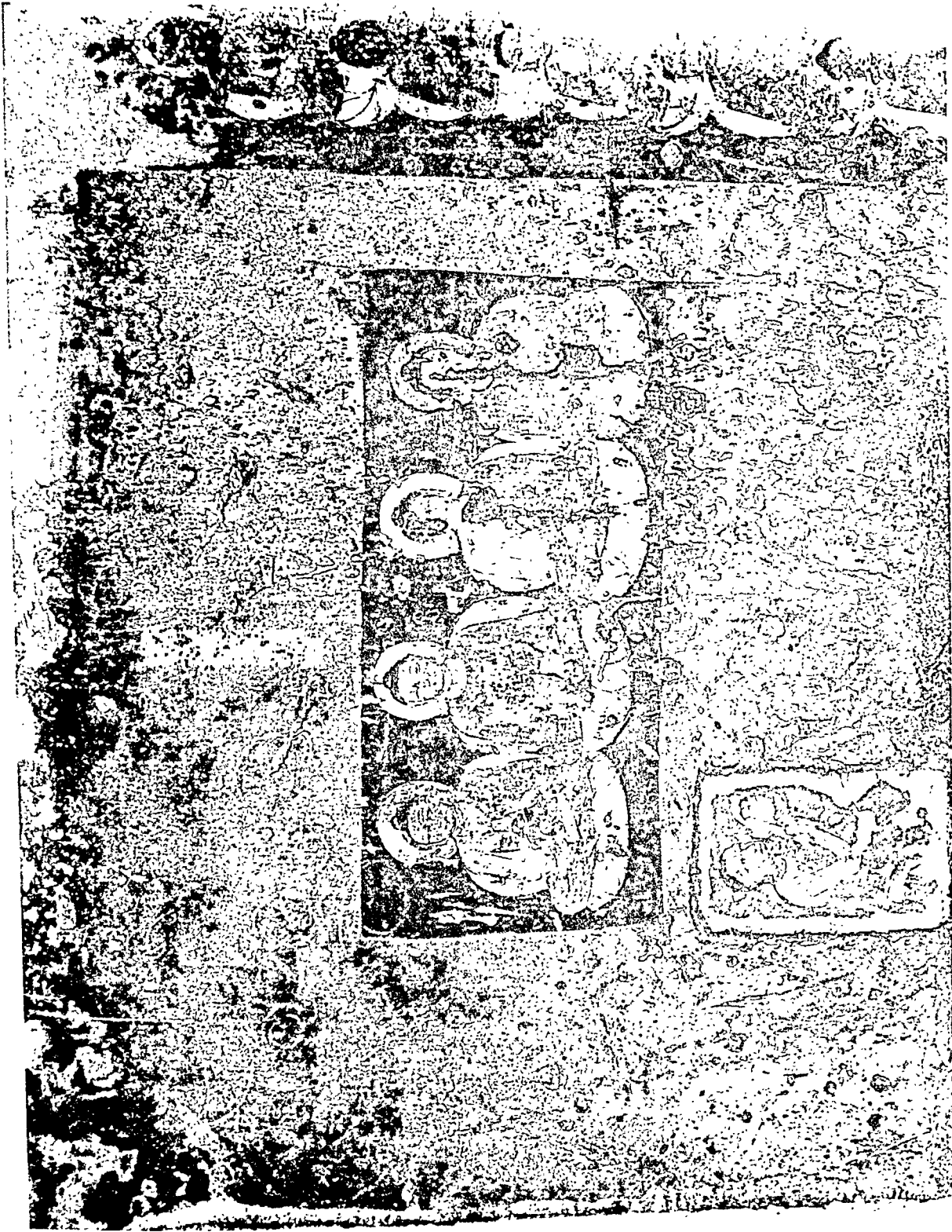




(3) MAITRIBALA JĀTAKA  
Inscriptions 5 and 6







(4) THE BUDDHAS AND THE MODERN KANARESE INSCRIPTION

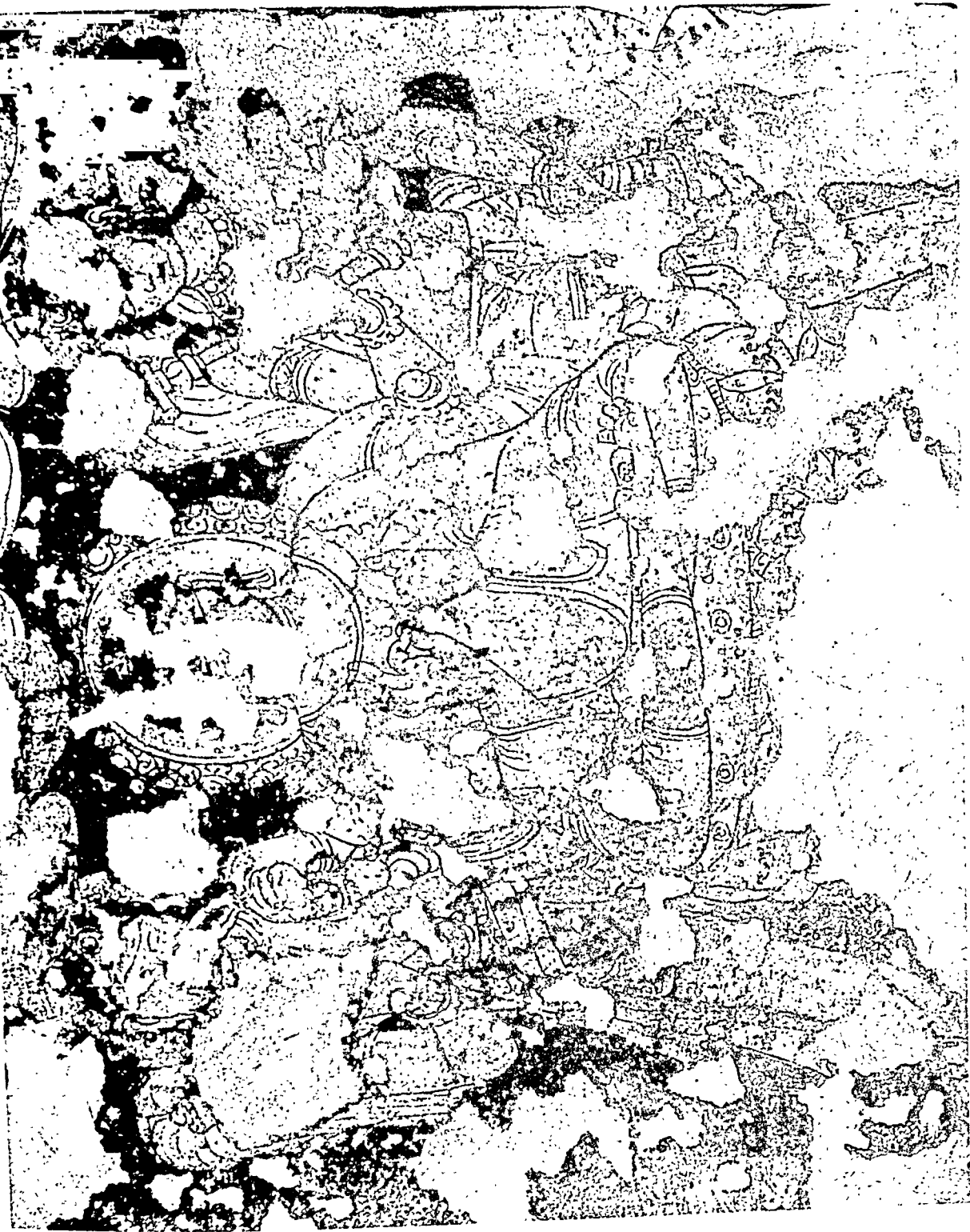
Inscription no. 7





(5) THE BUDDHAS AND THE INDISTINCT INSCRIPTION ON THE BACK WALL OF  
THE LEFT CORRIDOR





(6) THE BUDDHA AND THE INSCRIPTION ON THE BACK WALL TO THE LEFT OF  
THE ANTECHAMBER

Inscription no. 9





(7) THE BUDDHA AND THE INDISTINCT INSCRIPTION ON THE LEFT PILLAR OF  
THE ANTECHAMBER

Inscription no. 10







(8) THE BUDDHAS AND INSCRIPTIONS ON THE BACK WALL OF  
THE ANTECHAMBER

Inscription no. 11

2015  
2016



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